







Bangladesh

Bangladesh,^[a] officially the **People's Republic of Bangladesh**,^[b] is a country in South Asia. It is the eighth-most populous country in the world and is among the most densely populated countries with a population of 170 million in an area of 148,460 square kilometres (57,320 sq mi). Bangladesh shares land borders with India to the north, west, and east, and Myanmar to the southeast. To the south, it has a coastline along the Bay of Bengal. It is narrowly separated from Bhutan and Nepal by the Siliguri Corridor, and from China by the mountainous Indian state of Sikkim in the north. Dhaka, the capital and largest city, is the nation's political, financial, and cultural centre. Chittagong is the second-largest city and is the busiest port on the Bay of Bengal. The official language of Bangladesh is Bengali while Bangladeshi English is also used in the government and official documents alongside Bengali.

Bangladesh forms the sovereign part of the historic and ethnolinguistic region of Bengal, which was divided during the Partition of British India in 1947 as the eastern enclave of the Dominion of Pakistan, which it separated from in a bloody independence war in 1971.^[17] The country has a Bengali Muslim majority. Ancient Bengal was known as Gangaridai and was a bastion of pre-Islamic kingdoms. Muslim conquests after 1204 heralded the sultanate and Mughal periods, during which an independent Bengal Sultanate and a wealthy Mughal Bengal transformed the region into an important centre of regional affairs, trade, and diplomacy. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the maximum extent of British Bengal stretched from the Khyber Pass in the west to Singapore in the east.^{[18][19]} The creation of Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905 set a precedent for the emergence of Bangladesh. The All India Muslim League was founded in Dhaka in 1906.^[20] In 1940, the first Prime Minister of Bengal, A. K. Fazlul Huq, supported the Lahore Resolution. Before the partition of Bengal, a

People's Republic of Bangladesh গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ (Bengali) <i>Gôṇôprôjātôntrī Bārlādēs</i>	
	
Flag	Emblem
Anthem: আমার সোনার বাংলা (Bengali) <i>Amar Sonar Bangla</i> ("My Golden Bengal") <div><div>▶</div><div>0:00 / 0:00</div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div>	
Government Seal 	
	
Capital and largest city	Dhaka 23°45′50″N 90°23′20″E
Official language and national language	Bengali ^{[1][2]}
Recognised foreign language	English ^[3]

Bengali sovereign state was first proposed by premier H. S. Suhrawardy. A referendum and the announcement of the Radcliffe Line established the present-day territorial boundary.

In 1947, East Bengal became the most populous province in the Dominion of Pakistan. It was renamed East Pakistan, and Dhaka became the country's legislative capital. The Bengali Language Movement in 1952; the East Bengali legislative election, 1954; the 1958 Pakistani coup d'état; the six point movement of 1966; and the 1970 Pakistani general election resulted in the rise of Bengali nationalism and pro-democracy movements. The refusal of the Pakistani military junta to transfer power to the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led to the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. The Mukti Bahini, aided by India, waged a successful armed revolution. The conflict saw the Bangladeshi genocide and the massacre of pro-independence Bengali civilians, primarily targeting intellectuals. The new state of Bangladesh became a constitutionally secular state in 1972.^[21] Islam was declared the state religion in 1988.^{[22][23][24]} In 2010, the Bangladesh Supreme Court reaffirmed secular principles in the constitution.^[25] The Constitution of Bangladesh officially declares it a socialist state.^[26]

A middle power in the Indo-Pacific,^[27] Bangladesh is home to the fifth-most spoken native language in the world, the third-largest Muslim-majority population in the world, and the second-largest economy in South Asia. It maintains the third-largest military in the region and is the largest contributor of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations.^[28] Bangladesh is a unitary parliamentary republic based on the Westminster system. Bengalis make up almost 99% of the total population.^[29] The country consists of eight divisions, 64 districts and 495 subdistricts, as well as the world's largest mangrove forest. It hosts one of the largest refugee populations in the world due to the Rohingya genocide.^[30] Bangladesh faces many challenges, particularly corruption, political instability, overpopulation and effects of climate change. Bangladesh has been a leader within the Climate Vulnerable Forum. It hosts the headquarters of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). It is a founding

Ethnic groups (2022 census) ^[4]	99% <u>Bengali</u> 1% <u>others</u> <u>Bishnupriyas</u> · <u>Chakmas</u> · <u>Garos</u> · <u>Khasis</u> · <u>Khumis</u> · <u>Manipuris</u> · <u>Marmas</u> · <u>Mizos</u> · <u>Mrus</u> · <u>Santals</u> · <u>Tanchangyas</u> · <u>Tripuris</u>
Religion (2022 census) ^{[5][6][7]}	91.04% <u>Islam</u> (official) 7.95% <u>Hinduism</u> 0.61% <u>Buddhism</u> 0.30% <u>Christianity</u> 0.12% <u>other</u>
Demonym(s)	<u>Bangladeshi</u>
Government	<u>Unitary parliamentary republic</u> under an <u>interim government</u>
<div><div>• <u>President</u></div><div>• <u>Chief Adviser</u></div><div>• <u>Chief Justice</u></div></div>	<u>Mohammed Shahabuddin</u> <u>Muhammad Yunus</u> <u>Syed Refaat Ahmed</u>
Legislature	<u>Jatiya Sangsad</u>
Independence from <u>Pakistan</u>	
<div><div>• <u>Declaration and liberation war</u></div><div>• <u>Provisional Government</u></div><div>• <u>Victory</u></div><div>• <u>Current constitution</u></div></div>	<u>26 March 1971</u> <u>10 April 1971</u> <u>16 December 1971</u> <u>16 December 1972</u>
Area	
<div><div>• <u>Total</u></div><div>• <u>Water (%)</u></div><div>• <u>Land area</u></div><div>• <u>Water area</u></div></div>	<u>148,460^[8] km²</u> (<u>57,320 sq mi</u>) (<u>92nd</u>) 6.4 <u>130,170 km²[8]</u> <u>18,290 km²[8]</u>
Population	
<div><div>• <u>2022 census</u></div><div>• <u>Density</u></div></div>	<u>169,828,911^{[9][10]}</u> (<u>8th</u>) <u>1,165/km²</u> (<u>3,017.3/sq mi</u>) (<u>13th</u>)
GDP (PPP)	<u>2024 estimate</u>
<div><div>• <u>Total</u></div><div>• <u>Per capita</u></div></div>	<u>▲ \$1.620 trillion^[11]</u> (<u>25th</u>) <u>▲ \$9,410^[12]</u> (<u>126th</u>)
GDP (nominal)	<u>2024 estimate</u>

member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as well as a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Nations.

Etymology

The etymology of *Bangladesh* ("Bengali country") can be traced to the early 20th century, when Bengali patriotic songs, such as *Aaji Bangladesher Hridoy* by Rabindranath Tagore and *Namo Namô Namô Bangladesh Momo* by Kazi Nazrul Islam, used the term in 1905 and 1932 respectively.^[31] 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 origins of the term *Bangla* are unclear, with theories pointing to a Bronze Age proto-Dravidian tribe,^[32] and the Iron Age Vanga Kingdom.^[33] The earliest known usage of the term is the Nesari plate in 805 AD. The term *Vangala Desa* is found in 11th-century South Indian records.^{[34][35]} The term gained official status during the Sultanate of Bengal in the 14th century.^{[36][37]} Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah proclaimed himself as the first "Shah of Bangala" in 1342.^[36] The word *Bangāl* became the most common name for the region during the Islamic period.^[38] 16th-century historian Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak mentions in his *Ain-i-Akbari* that the addition of the suffix "*al*" came from the fact that the ancient rajahs of the land raised mounds of earth in lowlands at the foot of the hills which were called "*al*".^[39] This is also mentioned in Ghulam Husain Salim's *Riyaz-us-Salatin*.^[40] The Indo-Aryan suffix *Desh* is derived from the Sanskrit word *deśha*, which means "land" or "country". Hence, the name *Bangladesh* means "Land of Bengal" or "Country of Bengal".^[35]

• Total	▲ \$455.166 billion ^[13] (34th)
• Per capita	▲ \$2,650 ^[14] (137th)
Gini (2022)	▲ 49.9 ^[15] high inequality
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.670 ^[16] medium (129th)
Currency	<u>Taka</u> (₳) (BDT)
Time zone	<u>UTC+6</u> (BST)
Driving side	left
Calling code	+880
ISO 3166 code	BD
Internet TLD	.bd বাংলা

History

Ancient Bengal

Stone Age tools have been found in different parts of Bangladesh.^[41] Remnants of Copper Age settlements date back 4,000 years. Ancient Bengal was settled by Austroasiatics, Tibeto-Burmans, Dravidians and Indo-Aryans in consecutive waves of migration.^{[42][43]} Archaeological evidence confirms that by the second millennium BCE, rice-cultivating communities inhabited the region. By the 11th century, people lived in systemically aligned housing, buried their dead, and manufactured copper ornaments and black and red pottery.^[44] The Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers were natural arteries for communication and transportation,^[44] and estuaries on the Bay of Bengal permitted maritime trade. The early Iron Age saw the development of metal



The earliest form of the Bengali language developed during the Pala Empire, shown here on a map of Asia in 800 CE.

weaponry, coinage, agriculture and irrigation.^[44] Major urban settlements formed during the late Iron Age, in the mid-first millennium BCE,^[45] when the Northern Black Polished Ware culture developed.^[46] In 1879, Alexander Cunningham identified Mahasthangarh as the capital of the Pundra Kingdom mentioned in the Rigveda.^{[47][48]} The oldest inscription in Bangladesh was found in Mahasthangarh and dates from the 3rd century BCE, written in the Brahmi script.^[49]

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.^{[50][51]} The site is also identified with the prosperous trading centre of Souanagoura listed on Ptolemy's world map.^[52] Roman geographers noted a large seaport in southeastern Bengal, corresponding to the present-day Chittagong region.^[53]

Ancient Buddhist and Hindu states which ruled Bangladesh included the Vanga, Samatata and Pundra kingdoms, the Mauryan and Gupta Empires, the Varman dynasty, Shashanka's kingdom, the Khadga and Candra dynasties, the Pala Empire, the Sena dynasty, the Harikela kingdom and the Deva dynasty. These states had well-developed currencies, banking, shipping, architecture, and art, and the ancient universities of Bikrampur and Mainamati hosted scholars from other parts of Asia. Gopala I was the first ever elected ruler of the region in 750 AD; he went on to form the Pala dynasty that ruled until 1161 AD, during which time Bengal prospered.^[54] Xuanzang of China was a noted scholar who resided at the Somapura Mahavihara (the largest monastery in ancient India), and Atisa travelled from Bengal to Tibet to preach Buddhism. The earliest form of the Bengali language emerged during the eighth century. Seafarers in the Bay of Bengal sailed and traded with Southeast Asia^[55] and exported Buddhist and Hindu cultures to the region since the early Christian era.^[56]

Islamic Bengal

The early history of Islam in Bengal is divided into two phases: the period of maritime trade with Arabia and Persia between the 8th and 12th centuries, and centuries of Muslim dynastic rule after the Islamic conquest of Bengal. The writings of Al-Idrisi, Ibn Hawqal, Al-Masudi, Ibn Khordadbeh and Sulaiman record the maritime links between Arabia, Persia and Bengal.^[57] Muslim trade with Bengal flourished after the fall of the Sasanian Empire and the Arab takeover of Persian trade routes. Much of this trade occurred with southeastern Bengal in areas east of the Meghna River. There is speculation regarding the presence of a Muslim community in Bangladesh as early as 690 CE; this is based on the discovery of one of South Asia's oldest mosques in northern Bangladesh.^{[58][59][57]} Bengal was possibly used as a transit route to China by the earliest Muslims. Abbasid coins have been discovered in the archaeological ruins of Paharpur and Mainamati.^[60]

Sultanate period

The Muslim conquest of Bengal began with the 1204 Ghurid expeditions led by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji, who overran the Sena capital in Gauda and led the first Muslim army into Tibet.^[44] Bengal was ruled by the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate for a century under the Mamluk, Balban, and Tughluq dynasties. In the 14th century, three city-states emerged in Bengal, including Sonargaon led by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, Satgaon led by Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah and Lakhnauti led by Alauddin Ali Shah. These city-states were led by former governors who declared independence from Delhi. In 1352, Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah united the three city-states into a single, unitary and independent Bengal Sultanate. The new Sultan of Bengal forced the Sultan of Delhi to retreat during an invasion. The army of Ilyas Shah reached as far as

Varanasi in the northwest, Kathmandu in the north, Kamarupa in the east, and Orissa in the south. During the reign of Sikandar Shah, Delhi recognised Bengal's independence. The Bengal Sultanate established a network of mint towns that acted as provincial capitals where the Sultan's currency was minted.^[61] As Bengal became the easternmost frontier of the Islamic world, Bengali crystallized as an official court language, giving rise to various prominent writers. The sultanate was evolving as a commercialized and monetized economy and as a melting pot of Muslim political, mercantile and military elites.^[62]

The two most prominent dynasties of the Bengal Sultanate were the Ilyas Shahi and Hussain Shahi dynasties. The reign of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah saw the opening of diplomatic relations with Ming China. The reign of the Sultan Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah saw the development of Bengali architecture. During the early 15th century, Bengal aided the Restoration of Min Saw Mon in Arakan, which led to the latter becoming a tributary state of Bengal.^{[63][64]} During the reign of Sultan Alauddin Hussain Shah, Bengali forces penetrated deep into the Brahmaputra Valley, and conquered part of Assam,^[65] Jajnagar in Orissa,^{[66][67]} the Jaunpur Sultanate, Pratapgarh Kingdom and the island of Chandradwip.^{[68][69][70][71][72]} By 1500, Gaur became the sixth-most populous city in the world with a population of 200,000.^{[73][74]} Maritime trade linked Bengal with China, Malacca, Sumatra, Brunei, Portuguese India, East Africa, Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Yemen and the Maldives. The Sultans permitted the opening of the Portuguese settlement in Chittagong.

The disintegration of the Bengal Sultanate began with the intervention of the Suri Empire. Babur began invading Bengal after creating the Mughal Empire. The Bengal Sultanate collapsed with the overthrow of the Karrani dynasty during the reign of Akbar. However, the Bhati region of eastern Bengal continued to be ruled by aristocrats of the former Bengal Sultanate led by Isa Khan. They formed an independent federation called the Twelve Bhuiyans, with their capital in Sonargaon. The Bhuiyans ultimately succumbed to the Mughals after Musa Khan was defeated.

Mughal period

The Mughal Empire controlled Bengal by the 17th century. Musa Khan of Bengal, the last independent ruler of Sonargaon after resisting Mughal conquest for several years on 10 July 1610 was defeated and dethroned by Islam Khan Chisti, the army general of Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Islam Khan Chisti became the first Mughal Subahdar of Bengal. After his defeat Musa Khan became loyal to the Mughal Empire. He actively participated in the conquest of Tripura and the suppression of revolt in Kamrup.^[75]

The Mughals established Dhaka as a fort city and commercial metropolis. It was the capital of Bengal Subah for 75 years.^[76] In 1666, the Mughals expelled the Arakanese from the port of Chittagong. Mughal Bengal attracted foreign traders for its muslin and silk goods, and the Armenians were



Chinese manuscript showing an African giraffe gifted to China by the Sultan of Bengal on 20 September 1414



The Mughals built riverside fortifications with musket holes like in Hajiganj Fort.

a notable merchant community. A Portuguese settlement in Chittagong flourished in the southeast, and a Dutch settlement in Rajshahi existed in the north.^[77] Bengal accounted for 40% of overall Dutch imports from Asia, including more than 50% of textiles and around 80% of raw silk.^[78] The Bengal Subah, described as the *Paradise of the Nations*,^[79] was a major global exporter,^{[78][80][81]} a notable centre of worldwide industries such as muslin, cotton textiles, silk,^[44] and shipbuilding.^[82] Its citizens enjoyed one of the world's best living standards.^[83]



The Bibi Mariam Cannon (Lady Mary Cannon) is a large early modern artillery piece which the Mughals used to defend their bases.

During the 18th century, the Nawabs of Bengal became the region's de facto rulers, with a realm encompassing much of eastern South Asia. The Nawabs forged alliances with European colonial companies, making the region relatively prosperous early in the century. Bengal accounted for 50% of the gross domestic product of the empire. The Bengali economy relied on textile manufacturing, shipbuilding, saltpetre production, craftsmanship, and agricultural produce. Bengal was a major hub for international trade, renowned for its silk and cotton textiles worldwide.^{[84][44]} Bengal was also famed as a shipbuilding hub.^[85]

Eastern Bengal was a thriving melting pot with strong trade and cultural networks. It was a relatively prosperous part of the subcontinent and the centre of the Muslim population in the eastern subcontinent.^[86] The Bengali Muslim population was a product of religious evolution,^[44] and their pre-Islamic beliefs included elements of Buddhism and Hinduism. The construction of mosques, Islamic academies (madrasas), and Sufi monasteries (khanqahs) facilitated conversion, and Islamic cosmology played a significant role in developing Bengali society. Scholars have theorised that Bengalis were attracted to Islam by its egalitarian social order, which contrasted with the Hindu caste system.^[87] By the 15th century, Muslim poets were widely writing in the Bengali language. Syncretic cults, such as the Baul movement, emerged on the fringes of Bengali Muslim society. The Persianate culture was significant in Bengal, where cities like Sonargaon became the easternmost centres of Persian influence.^{[88][89]}



Siraj-ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal

In 1756, nawab Siraj ud-Daulah sought to rein in the rising power of the British East India Company by revoking their free trade rights and demanding the dismantling of their fortification in Calcutta. A military conflict culminated in the Battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757.^[90] Robert Clive exploited rivalries within the nawab's family, bribing Mir Jafar, the nawab's uncle and commander in chief, to ensure Siraj-ud-Daula's defeat.^{[91][92]} Clive rewarded Mir Jafar by making him nawab in place of Siraj-ud-Daula, but henceforth the position was a figurehead appointed and controlled by the company.^{[93][94]} Historians often describe the battle as "the beginning of British colonial rule in South Asia".^[95]

The Company replaced Mir Jafar with his son-in-law, Mir Kasim, in 1760. Mir Kasim challenged British control by allying with Mughal emperor Shah Alam II and the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja ud-Daulah, but the company decisively defeated the three at the Battle of Buxar on 23 October 1764.^{[92][94]} The resulting

treaty made the Mughal emperor a puppet of the British and gave the company the right to collect taxes (*diwani*) in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, giving them de facto control of the region.^{[94][96]} The Company used Bengal's tax revenue to expand their territorial possession in rest of South Asia.^[96]

British Bengal

European arrivals

The Bengal Sultanate permitted the Portuguese settlement in Chittagong to be established in 1528. It became the first European colonial enclave in Bengal. The Bengal Sultanate lost control of Chittagong in 1531 after Arakan declared independence and the established Kingdom of Mrauk U. Portuguese ships from Goa and Malacca began frequenting the port city in the 16th century. The cartaz system was introduced and required all ships in the area to purchase naval trading licenses from the Portuguese. Portuguese piracy in the sea flourished. The nearby island of Sandwip was captured in 1602. In 1615, the Portuguese Navy defeated a joint fleet of the Dutch East India Company and the Arakanese near the coast of Chittagong.



Lord Clive meeting with Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey, which led to the overthrow of the last independent Nawab of Bengal

After 1534, the Bengal Sultan allowed the Portuguese to create several settlements at Satgaon,^[97] Hoogly, Bandel, and Dhaka. In 1535, the Portuguese allied with the Bengal Sultan and held the Teliagarhi pass 280 kilometres (170 mi) from Patna helping to avoid the invasion by the Mughals. By then several of the products came from Patna and the Portuguese send in traders, establishing a factory there in 1580.^[98] The region accounted for 40% of Dutch imports from Asia.^[78] In 1666, the Mughal government of Bengal led by viceroy Shaista Khan conquered Chittagong and expelled the Portuguese and Arakanese. The first Anglo-Mughal War took place in 1686.^{[99][100]} By the 18th century, the British, French, Dutch, Danish and Austrian East India Companies built factories and trading posts across Bengal.^{[101][77][102][103]} These companies obtained consent from the Nawabs of Bengal for trading rights and concessions. The British East India Company became the most powerful among the European companies in Bengal.

British East India Company rule

After the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and Battle of Buxar in 1764, by 1772 Bengal was the first major part of the Indian subcontinent to be conquered by the British East India Company. Under the terms of the Treaty of Allahabad, the company would collect taxes on behalf of the Mughal emperor. The treaty was written by the Bengali Muslim diplomat I'tisam-ud-Din.^[104] Under Company rule in India, Bengal was effectively ruled by the British on behalf of the Mughal emperor under Mughal suzerainty. The East India Company formed the Bengal Presidency, through which it administered the region until 1858. A notable aspect of the company's rule was the Permanent Settlement, which established the feudal zamindari system; in addition, Company policies led to the deindustrialisation of Bengal's textile industry.^[105] The capital amassed by the East India Company in Bengal was invested in the emerging Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.^{[106][107]} Economic mismanagement, alongside drought and a smallpox epidemic, directly led to the Great Bengal famine of 1770, which is estimated to have caused the deaths of millions of people.^{[108][109][110][111]} Several rebellions broke out during the early 19th century, as Company rule had

displaced the Muslim ruling class from power. A conservative Islamic cleric, Haji Shariatullah, sought to overthrow the British by propagating Islamic revivalism.^[112] Several towns in Bangladesh participated in the Indian Rebellion of 1857.^[113]

British Raj

After the 1857 rebellion, the British parliament transferred India's administration from the company to the British government. Direct rule by the Crown was imposed. The British government took over all the administrative functions of the Bengal Presidency.^[114]

At its maximum extent, the Bengal Presidency stretched from the Khyber Pass to Southeast Asia. According to the British historian Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, the Bengal Presidency was an administrative jurisdiction introduced by the East India Company and staffed by British civil servants, aristocrats and military officers. It would stretch across the whole of northern India up to the Khyber Pass on the north-west frontier with Afghanistan. It spread eastwards to Burma and Singapore.^[115] The Bengal Presidency was arguably the largest division of the British Empire. Its territorial evolution can be contrasted with the maximum extent of New Spain in the Spanish Empire, which stretched from the Philippines to the Americas.^{[116][117]} The Bengal Presidency originally covered the territory gained from the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, including the regions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It later stretched into areas of the Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal capital in Delhi after the Battle of Buxar in 1764. The Second Anglo-Sikh War resulted in the British conquest of Punjab, and the eventual extension of the presidency to the Khyber Pass. The Bengal Army played a key role in the expansion into North India up to the Khyber Pass. The native Gurkha infantry played a key role in the expansion of the presidency into the northeastern frontier regions of Assam. The East India Company also took control of coastal Burma, while English traders brought trading settlements in the Malacca Straits under British rule.

The rebellion of 1857 upended the government of British India. The Straits Settlements were separated from Bengal and became a crown colony in 1867.^[118] By the turn of the century, most of northern India was reorganized into separate provinces, including Punjab, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and Assam. In Burma, the Arakan region which bordered Bengal received many settlers. Wealthy farmers from Chittagong played an important role in developing the rice economy in Burma. Arakan Division was one of the top rice exporters in the world, due in large part to rich farmers from Chittagong.^{[119][120][121]}

Within what is now Bangladesh, the trade networks of the British Empire brought traders and diplomats from far and wide.^{[122][123]} Benjamin Joy was nominated by George Washington as the first U.S. consul and a consular agency was created for Chittagong.^[123] In Dhaka, the Mughal legacy was reflected in the city's courtly-genteel manners based on Mughal etiquette. Dhaka became home to communities of Armenians, Greeks, and Jews.^[124] The British established several schools, colleges, and a university in what is now Bangladesh. Syed Ahmed Khan and Ram Mohan Roy promoted modern and liberal education in the subcontinent, inspiring the Aligarh movement^[125] and the Bengal Renaissance.^[126] During the late



Charles Cornwallis was responsible for enacting the Permanent Settlement.



Bengal, Bihar, Awadh and Allahabad in 1786

19th century, novelists, social reformers, and feminists emerged from Muslim Bengali society. Electricity and municipal water systems were introduced in the 1890s; cinemas opened in many towns during the early 20th century. East Bengal's plantation economy was important to the British Empire, particularly its jute and tea. The British established tax-free river ports, such as the Port of Narayanganj, and large seaports like the Port of Chittagong.

Bengal had the highest gross domestic product in British India, with the summer capital of Shillong boasting the highest per capita income in the subcontinent.^[127] Bengal was one of the first regions in Asia to have a railway, which began operating in 1862.^[128] The main railway companies in the region were the Eastern Bengal Railway and Assam Bengal Railway. Railways competed with waterborne transport to become one of the main means of transport.^[129]

Supported by the Muslim aristocracy, the British government created the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905; the new province received increased investment in education, transport, and industry.^[130] However, the first partition of Bengal created an uproar in Calcutta and the Indian National Congress. In response to growing Hindu nationalism, the All India Muslim League was formed in Dhaka in 1906. The British government reorganised the provinces in 1912, reuniting East and West Bengal and making Assam a second province.

The Raj was slow to allow self-rule in the colonial subcontinent. It established the Bengal Legislative Council in 1862, and the council's native Bengali representation increased during the early 20th century. The Bengal Provincial Muslim League was formed in 1913 to advocate civil rights for Bengali Muslims. During the 1920s, the league was divided into factions supporting the Khilafat movement and favouring cooperation with the British to achieve self-rule. Segments of the Bengali elite supported Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's secularist forces.^[131] In 1929, the All Bengal Tenants Association was formed in the Bengal Legislative Council to counter the influence of the Hindu landed gentry, and the Indian Independence and Pakistan Movements strengthened during the early 20th century. After the Morley-Minto Reforms and the diarchy era in the legislatures of British India, the British government promised limited provincial autonomy in 1935. The Bengal Legislative Assembly, British India's largest legislature, was established in 1937. British Burma was also separated from British India in 1937.

Although, it won most seats in 1937, the Bengal Congress boycotted the legislature. A. K. Fazlul Huq of the Krishak Praja Party was elected as the first Prime Minister of Bengal. In 1940 Huq supported the Lahore Resolution, which envisaged independent states in the subcontinent's northwestern and eastern Muslim-majority regions. Huq was succeeded by Khawaja Nazimuddin, who grappled with the effects of the Burma Campaign, the Bengal famine of 1943 which claimed the lives of millions of people,^[132] and the Quit India movement. During World War II, Bengal faced a possible Japanese invasion from Burma. Chittagong was bombed by the Japanese air force in April and May 1942.^{[133][134]} Allied forces were



Arakan under the Bengal Presidency after the First Anglo-Burmese War led to the British annexation of Arakan



Lord Curzon oversaw the creation of Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905.



Sir Khwaja Salimullah oversaw the creation of the All India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906.

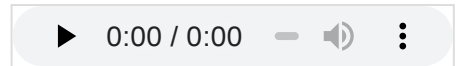
stationed across eastern Bengal during the war.^[135] In 1946, the Bengal Provincial Muslim League won the provincial election with the largest Muslim League mandate in British India. H. S. Suhrawardy, who made a final futile effort for a United Bengal in 1946, was the last premier of Bengal.

Partition of Bengal (1947)

On 3 June 1947, the Mountbatten Plan outlined the partition of British India. On 6 July, the Sylhet region of Assam voted in a referendum to join East Bengal. Cyril Radcliffe

was tasked with drawing the borders of Pakistan and India, and the Radcliffe Line established the boundaries of present-day Bangladesh. The

Radcliffe Line awarded two-thirds of Bengal as the eastern wing of Pakistan, but the medieval and early modern Bengali capitals of Gaur, Pandua and Murshidabad fell on the Indian side close to the border with Pakistan.



British Bengal's last premier H. S. Suhrawardy speaking about partition

As part of Pakistan

The Dominion of Pakistan was created on 14 August 1947. East Bengal, with Dhaka as the capital, was the most populous province of the 1947 Pakistani federation (led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who promised freedom of religion and secular democracy in the new state).^{[136][137]}

Khawaja Nazimuddin was East Bengal's first chief minister with Frederick Chalmers Bourne its governor. The All Pakistan Awami Muslim League was formed in 1949. In 1950, the East Bengal Legislative Assembly enacted land reform, abolishing the Permanent Settlement and the zamindari system.^[138] The 1952 Bengali Language Movement was the first sign of friction between the country's geographically separated wings. The Awami Muslim League was renamed the more secular Awami League in 1953.^[139]

The first constituent assembly was dissolved in 1954. The United Front coalition swept aside the Muslim League in a landslide victory in the 1954 East Bengali legislative election. The following year, East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan as part of the One Unit programme, and the province became a vital part of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.



Women students of Dhaka University marching in defiance of the Section 144 prohibition on assembly during the Bengali Language Movement in early 1953

Pakistan adopted a new constitution in 1956. The Pakistan Army imposed military rule in 1958, and Ayub Khan was the country's strongman for 11 years. Political repression increased after the coup. Khan introduced a new constitution in 1962, replacing Pakistan's parliamentary system with a presidential and gubernatorial system (based on electoral college selection) known as Basic Democracy.^{[140][141][142]} In 1962, Dhaka became the seat of the National Assembly of Pakistan, a move seen as appeasing increased Bengali nationalism.^[143] The Pakistani government built the controversial Kaptai Dam, displacing the Chakma people from their indigenous homeland in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.^[144] The Indo-Pakistani War

of 1965 blocked cross-border transport links with neighbouring India in what is described as a second partition.^[145] In 1966, Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced a six-point movement for a federal parliamentary democracy.

According to senior World Bank officials, the Pakistani government practised extensively economic discrimination against East Pakistan. Despite generating 70% of Pakistan's export revenue with jute and tea,^[146] East Pakistan received much less government spending than West Pakistan. Economists in East Pakistan, including Rehman Sobhan and Nurul Islam among others, demanded a separate foreign exchange account for the eastern wing. The economists paraphrased Pakistan's Two-Nation Theory ideology against India, by pointing to the existence of two different economies within Pakistan itself, dubbed the Two-Economies Theory.^{[147][148][149][150]} The central government also refused to release foreign aid allocated for East Pakistan.^[151] The populist leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested for treason in the Agartala Conspiracy Case and was released during the 1969 uprising in East Pakistan which resulted in Ayub Khan's resignation. General Yahya Khan assumed power, reintroducing martial law.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (seated) at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in the United States in 1958

Ethnic and linguistic discrimination was common in Pakistan's civil and military services, in which Bengalis were under-represented.^[152] Cultural discrimination also prevailed, making East Pakistan forge a distinct political identity.^[153] Authorities banned Bengali literature and music in state media.^[154] A cyclone devastated the coast of East Pakistan in 1970, killing an estimated 500,000 people,^[155] and the central government was criticised for its poor response.^[156] After the December 1970 elections, the Bengali-nationalist Awami League won 167 of 169 East Pakistani seats in the National Assembly. The League claimed the right to form a government and develop a new constitution but was strongly opposed by the Pakistani military and the Pakistan Peoples Party (led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto).

War of Independence

In early 1971, negotiations began on the transfer of power.^[157] The Awami League wanted to develop a constitution based on its Six Points agenda;^[157] this was opposed by the Pakistani military, the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Muslim League factions. Talks eventually broke down as the junta led by Yahya Khan prepared for a military operation in East Pakistan. The Bengali population was angered when the newly elected National Assembly was not convened under pressure from the junta and West Pakistani politicians. Despite enjoying an absolute majority in the newly elected parliament, Prime Minister-elect Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was prevented from taking the oath. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto threatened to break the legs of West Pakistani MPs if they flew to Dhaka for the first session of parliament.^{[158][159]} Civil disobedience erupted across East Pakistan,^[160] with loud calls for independence. Mujib addressed a pro-independence rally of nearly 2 million people on 7 March 1971, where he said, "This time the struggle is for our liberation. This time the struggle is for our independence".^[161] The flag of Bangladesh was raised for the first time on 23 March, Pakistan's Republic Day.^[162]

Around midnight on 26 March 1971, military operations under the code name of Operation Searchlight began.^{[163][164]} The first targets were the student dormitories of Dhaka University, the police barracks in Dhaka's Rajarbagh locality, and Hindu neighbourhoods in Old Dhaka. The Pakistan Army arrested Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman and flew him to a jail in West Pakistan.^{[165][166][167]} The army burnt down the *Ittefaq* newspaper's office.^[168] Before his arrest, Mujib proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh.^{[169][170]} Pakistani forces launched a widespread campaign of killings, torture, rape, arson and destruction across East Pakistan, targeting segments of the population perceived to be pro-Awami League and pro-independence. The Hindu minority was distinctly targeted because of Pakistan's hostility with neighbouring Hindu-majority India.^[171]



Museum of Independence, Dhaka

During the Bangladesh Liberation War, the Mukti Bahini emerged as the Bengali resistance force. A highly successful guerrilla war was fought against Pakistan. Bengalis continued to defect from Pakistan's diplomatic service, military, police, and bureaucracy. In April, they helped Awami League leaders to set up the Provisional Government of Bangladesh, which operated in exile from Calcutta with the support of the Indian government until December 1971. The Bangladesh Armed Forces was formally established in November 1971, when Bengali forces secured control of much of the countryside. The Mukti Bahini forced the railway network to shut down to stop Pakistani troop movements. Some of the notable operations of the Mukti Bahini included Operation Jackpot and Operation Barisal.

India intervened in the war on 3 December 1971, after Pakistan's failed pre-emptive air strikes on India's northwestern flank. With a joint ground advance by Bangladeshi and Indian forces, coupled with air strikes by both India and the small Bangladeshi air contingent, the capital Dhaka was liberated from Pakistani occupation in mid-December. During the last phase of the war, both the Soviet Union and the United States dispatched naval forces to the Bay of Bengal in a Cold War standoff. The nine-month-long war ended with the surrender of the Pakistan Eastern Command to the Bangladesh-India Allied Forces on 16 December 1971.^{[172][173]} Under international pressure, Pakistan released Mujib from imprisonment on 8 January 1972 and he was flown to a million-strong homecoming in Dhaka.^{[174][175]} Remaining Indian troops were withdrawn by 12 March 1972.^[176]



Jagjit Singh Aurora of the Indian Army watches A. A. K. Niazi of the Pakistan Army sign the Instrument of Surrender in 1971, ending the Bangladesh Liberation War.

By August 1972, the new state was recognised by 86 countries.^[177] Pakistan recognised Bangladesh in 1974 after pressure from most of the Muslim countries.^[178]

The Government of Bangladesh records the official death toll of the war at 3 million,^[179] including victims of atrocities and those who died from starvation. Minimum estimates for the number of those killed range between 300,000 and 500,000.^{[180][181]} An estimated 10 million refugees fled to neighboring India and 30 million were internally displaced.^{[182][183][184][185]} The war was one of the first to record the use of rape as a weapon of war, with an estimated 200,000 women being subjected to sexual abuse by the Pakistani army.^[186] The war saw the systematic targeting of Bengali elites,^[187] particularly intellectuals. The Jamaat-e-Islami formed paramilitary militias, which aided Pakistani



Liberation War Museum, Dhaka

troops and guided them to their intended targets. While Bengali Muslims bore the brunt of atrocities because of racial tensions with the largely Punjabi Muslim West Pakistani forces,^[188] the minority Bengali Hindu community was singled out for attacks by the Pakistani armed forces, a legacy which has led Hindu nationalist groups to claim that the war was a Hindu genocide.^[189] Archer Blood, the US Consul General in East Pakistan at the time of the war, described the situation as "selective genocide".^{[190][191][192]} In 1974 and 2002, Pakistan formally expressed "regret" for what happened.^{[193][194]} In 2015, Pakistan denied any atrocities took place.^[195] In 2022, a bipartisan resolution was introduced in the US Congress to "Recognize the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971".^[196] The International Association of Genocide Scholars regards the atrocities as a genocide.^{[197][198]}

Modern Bangladesh

First parliamentary era

The new government of Bangladesh transformed East Pakistan's state apparatus into an independent Bangladeshi state. The Awami League successfully reorganised the bureaucracy, framed a written constitution, and rehabilitated war victims. In January 1972, Mujib introduced a parliamentary republic through a presidential decree.^[199] On 12 January 1972 Mujib took oath and assumed office as Prime Minister of Bangladesh.^[200] The emerging state structure was heavily influenced by the British Westminster model. The Constitution Drafting Committee led by Kamal Hossain established a bill of rights influenced by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.^[201]

The constituent assembly adopted the constitution of Bangladesh on 4 November 1972, establishing a secular, multiparty parliamentary democracy. Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth of Nations, the UN, the OIC, and the Non-Aligned Movement. In his maiden speech to the UNGA, Mujib stated that "the Bengali has struggled for many centuries for the right to live a free and honourable life as independent citizens of an independent country. They expected to live in peace and harmony with all the nations in the world".^{[202][203]} He strengthened relations with India by signing a 25-year friendship treaty, a border demarcation agreement, and protocols on cross-border trade. The land boundary treaty was aimed at resolving border disputes inherited from East Pakistan and swapping the Indo-Bangladesh enclaves. The land boundary agreement was challenged in court, which ruled that the government needed the prior approval of parliament to implement the land boundary treaty.^[204] Mujib was a vocal supporter of Palestinian rights despite Israel being one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh's independence. In what became Bangladesh's first dispatch of military aid overseas, Mujib sent an army medical unit to Egypt during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.^[205]

In economic policy, the first five years of Bangladesh was the only socialist period in its history. Mujib nationalized 580 industrial plants, as well as banks and insurance companies. In 1974, the government invited international oil companies to explore the Bay of Bengal for oil and natural gas. Petrobangla was established as the national oil and gas corporation.^[206] The Mujib government faced huge economic problems exacerbated by the resettlement of millions of people displaced in 1971, a breakdown in the food



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with a commander of the Bangladesh Navy

supply chain, poor health services and a lack of other necessities. The effects of the 1970 cyclone were still being felt, and the economy needed reconstruction after the war.^[207] The Bangladesh famine of 1974 damaged Mujib's popularity.

Mujib presided over a regime that was built around his personality cult. Sycophants and loyalists developed an ideology called Mujibism.

Presidential era (1975–1991)

In January 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman introduced one-party socialist rule under BAKSAL. Rahman banned all newspapers except four state-owned publications and amended the constitution to increase his power. He was assassinated during a coup on 15 August 1975, and the presidency passed to the usurper Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad for four months. Ahmad is widely regarded as a traitor by Bangladeshis.^[208] Tajuddin Ahmad, the nation's first prime minister, and four other independence leaders were assassinated on 4 November 1975. Chief Justice Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem was installed as president by the military on 6 November 1975. Bangladesh was governed by a military junta led by the Chief Martial Law Administrator for three years. In 1977, the army chief Ziaur Rahman became president. Rahman reinstated multiparty politics, privatised industries and newspapers, re-opened the Dhaka Stock Exchange, established BEPZA and held the country's second general election in 1979. In 1978, 200,000 Arakanese Muslim refugees crossed the Naf River into Bangladesh due to a Burmese military crackdown. The refugees were later repatriated.^[209] A semi-presidential system evolved, with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) governing until 1982. Rahman was assassinated in 1981 and was succeeded by vice-president Abdus Sattar.^[210]



Ziaur Rahman (second from right) with members of the Dutch royal family in 1978

After a year in office, Sattar was overthrown in the 1982 Bangladesh coup d'état. Chief Justice A. F. M. Ahsanuddin Chowdhury was installed as president, but army chief Hussain Muhammad Ershad became the country's *de facto* leader and assumed the presidency in 1983. Ershad lifted martial law in 1986. He governed with four successive prime ministers (Ataur Rahman Khan, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Moudud Ahmed and Kazi Zafar Ahmed) and a parliament dominated by his Jatiyo Party. Ershad pursued administrative decentralisation, dividing the country into 64 districts, and pushed Parliament to make Islam the state religion in 1988.^[211] The First SAARC Summit was held in Dhaka under Ershad in December 1985.^[212] Bangladesh dispatched its first contingent of UN peacekeepers in 1988.^[205] In 1990, Bangladesh joined the US-led coalition to liberate Kuwait during the Gulf War.^{[205][213]} A mass uprising forced Ershad to resign, and Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed led the country's first caretaker government as part of the transition to parliamentary rule.^[210]

Parliamentary era (1991–present)

After the 1991 general election, the twelfth amendment to the constitution restored the parliamentary republic, and Begum Khaleda Zia became Bangladesh's first female prime minister. Zia, a former first lady, led a BNP government from 1990 to 1996. In 1991, her finance minister, Saifur Rahman, began a major programme to liberalise the Bangladeshi economy.^[214] In addition to setting up the Chittagong Stock Exchange; banking, pharmaceuticals, aviation, ceramics, steel, telecoms, and tertiary education were opened up for investments, resulting in increased market competition. Around 140,000 Bangladeshis lost

their lives during a 1991 cyclone; the lives of nearly 200,000 others were saved by a United States military-led task force through Operation Sea Angel, one of the largest disaster relief efforts ever conducted.^{[215][216][217]} In 1992, an estimated 250,000 refugees from Burma took shelter in Bangladesh due to the suppression of the Burmese pro-democracy movement; most of these refugees returned to Burma by 1993.^[209] In 1994, Bangladesh provided the largest non-US contingent in Operation Uphold Democracy, a military intervention in Haiti.^[218]

In 1996, a year of political upheaval saw a boycotted February election, an attempted military coup, and mediation efforts producing a caretaker government to oversee elections. For three months, Muhammad Habibur Rahman served as the interim leader of the country. The Awami League returned to power in the June election after 21 years. One of the first initiatives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was to repeal the deeply controversial Indemnity Ordinance, which protected her father's killers from prosecution. Hasina also signed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, which ended an insurgency in the southeastern hill districts. She reached an agreement with India for sharing the water of the Ganges.^[219] In 1997, Sheikh Hasina hosted South Africa's first post-apartheid president Nelson Mandela, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, and Turkish president Süleyman Demirel for the silver jubilee celebrations of Bangladesh's independence.^{[220][221]}

The economic reform momentum lost steam due to political instability, including frequent hartals and strikes by the opposition. In 2001, the BNP returned to power on the back of promises to improve the economy. The second Zia administration saw higher economic growth, but security and political problems gripped the country between 2004 and 2006. A radical Islamist militant group, the JMB, carried out a series of terror attacks. At the end of the BNP's term in 2006, there was widespread political unrest. The Bangladeshi military urged President Iajuddin Ahmed to impose a state of emergency and a caretaker government, led by Fakhruddin Ahmed, was installed from January 2007 to December 2008 to implement reforms to the electoral system, judiciary, and bureaucracy.^[214] The JMB leaders were arrested and later executed in March 2007.^[222]

After achieving a landslide victory in the 2008 Bangladeshi general election the Awami League government returned to power, taking their oath on 6 January 2009, with Sheikh Hasina once again becoming the Prime Minister and bringing political stability and economic growth to the nation.^[223] In 2010, the Supreme Court reduced the scope for military interventions through legal loopholes and reaffirmed secular principles in the constitution. The Awami League set up a war crimes tribunal to prosecute surviving Bengali Islamist collaborators of the 1971 atrocities. Human rights abuses increased under Hasina and her administration, particularly enforced disappearances by the Rapid Action Battalion, with the government being accused as



Bangladeshis unload humanitarian aid from a United States Marine Corps helicopter following a devastating cyclone in 1991.



Khaleda Zia (standing second from right) with the Emir of Bahrain in 1994



Sheikh Hasina with British Prime Minister David Cameron at 10 Downing Street in 2011

increasingly authoritarian since returning to power in 2009.^{[224][225][226][227][228]} The 2014 elections and 2024 elections were boycotted by the BNP-Jamaat alliance. The BNP and Jamaat have often engaged in violent protests to overthrow the government.^{[229][230]} In 2017, Bangladesh experienced the largest influx of Arakanese refugees in its history. An estimated 700,000 Rohingya refugees took shelter in Cox's Bazar after a campaign of ethnic cleansing in Rakhine State, Myanmar.^[231]

The national poverty rate went down from 80% in 1971 to 44.2% in 1991 to 12.9% in 2021.^{[232][233][234]} Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank, which Yunus founded, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for pioneering microfinance and their efforts to eradicate poverty. Bangladesh has emerged as the second-largest economy in South Asia,^{[235][236]} surpassing the per capita income levels of both India and Pakistan.^{[237][236]} Since 2009, Bangladesh has launched a series of infrastructure megaprojects. On 25 June 2022, the Padma Bridge opened and connected southwestern Bangladesh with the rest of the country, while the Dhaka Metro was opened in 2023.^{[238][239]} As part of the green transition, Bangladesh's industrial sector emerged as a leader in building green factories, with the country having the largest number of certified green factories in the world in 2023.^[240] In January 2024, Awami League led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina secured a fourth straight term in Bangladesh's general election. The Jatiya Party was the main opposition party.^[241] In March 2024, the government vowed to keep the country's pace of rapid economic development ongoing.^[242]

Following nationwide protests against the Awami League government, on the 5th of August 2024, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign and flee from Bangladesh to India.^{[243][244][245][246][247]} An interim government was formed on 8 August 2024, with Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus as the Chief Advisor.^[248]

Geography

Bangladesh is in South Asia on the Bay of Bengal. It is surrounded almost entirely by neighbouring India, and shares a small border with Myanmar to its southeast, though it lies very close to Nepal, Bhutan, and China. The country is divided into three regions. Most of the country is dominated by the fertile Ganges Delta, the largest river delta in the world.^[249] 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 tributaries. The Ganges unites with the Jamuna (main channel of the Brahmaputra) and later join the Meghna, finally flowing into the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh is called the "Land of Rivers";^[250] as it is home to over 57 trans-boundary rivers, the most of any nation-state. Water issues are hence politically complicated since the country is a lower riparian state to India.^[251]



Physical map of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is predominantly rich fertile flat land. Most of it is less than 12 m (39 ft) above sea level, and it is estimated that about 10% of its land would be flooded if the sea level were to rise by 1 m (3.3 ft).^[252] 17% of the country is covered by forests and 12% is covered by hill systems. The country's haor wetlands are of significance to global environmental science. The highest point in Bangladesh is the Saka Haphong, located near the border with Myanmar, with an elevation of 1,064 m (3,491 ft).^[253] Previously, either Keokradong or Tazing Dong were considered the highest.

Climate

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 never recorded an air temperature below 0 °C (32 °F), with a record low of 1.1 °C (34.0 °F) in the northwest city of Dinajpur on 3 February 1905.^[254] 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,^[255] combined with the effects of deforestation, soil degradation and erosion. The cyclones of 1970 and 1991 were particularly devastating, the latter killing approximately 140,000 people.^[256]



Flooding after the 1991 Bangladesh cyclone, which killed around 140,000 people

In September 1998, Bangladesh saw the most severe flooding in modern history, after which two-thirds of the country went underwater, along with a death toll of 1,000.^[257] As a result of various international and national level initiatives in disaster risk reduction, the human toll and economic damage from floods and cyclones have come down over the years.^[258] The 2007 South Asian floods ravaged areas across the country, leaving five million people displaced, with a death toll around 500.^[259]

Climate change

Bangladesh is recognised to be one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change.^{[260][261]} Over the course of a century, 508 cyclones have affected the Bay of Bengal region, 17 percent of which are believed to have made landfall in Bangladesh.^[262] Natural hazards that come from increased rainfall, rising sea levels, and tropical cyclones are expected to increase as the climate changes, each seriously affecting agriculture, water and food security, human health, and shelter.^[263] It is estimated that by 2050, a three-foot rise in sea levels will inundate some 20 percent of the land and displace more than 30 million people.^[264] To address the sea level rise threat in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 has been launched.^{[265][266]}

Biodiversity

Bangladesh is located in the Indomalayan realm, and lies within four terrestrial ecoregions: Lower Gangetic Plains moist deciduous forests, Mizoram–Manipur–Kachin rain forests, Sundarbans freshwater swamp forests, and Sundarbans mangroves.^[267] 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 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.^[268] The country has up to 6000 species of plant life, including 5000 flowering plants.^[269] Water bodies and wetland systems provide a habitat for many aquatic plants. Water lilies and lotuses grow vividly during the monsoon season. The country has 50 wildlife sanctuaries.



A Bengal tiger, the national animal, in the Sundarbans

Bangladesh is home to much of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, covering an area of 6,000 square kilometres (2,300 sq mi) 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, 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 with 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.^[268] The vast majority of animals dwell within a habitat of 150,000 square kilometres (58,000 sq mi).^[270] The Bengal tiger, clouded leopard, saltwater crocodile, black panther and fishing cat are among the chief predators in the Sundarbans.^[271] Northern and eastern Bangladesh is home to the Asian elephant, hoolock gibbon, Asian black bear and oriental pied hornbill.^[272] 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 populations of Irrawaddy and Ganges dolphins.^[273] The country has numerous species of amphibians (53), reptiles (139), marine reptiles (19) and marine mammals (5). It also has 628 species of birds.^[274]

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, limiting deforestation to a certain extent. Rapid urban growth has threatened natural habitats. The country has widespread environmental issues, pollution of the Dhaleshwari River by the textile industry and shrimp cultivation in Chakaria Sundarbans have both been described by academics as ecocides.^{[275][276]} Although many areas are protected under law, some 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.^[272] It ratified the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity on 3 May 1994.^[277] As of 2014, the country was set to revise its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.^[277]

Government and politics

Bangladesh is a *de jure* representative democracy under its constitution, with a Westminster-style parliamentary republic that has universal suffrage. The head of government is the Prime Minister, who forms a government every five years. The President invites the leader of the largest party in parliament to become Prime Minister.^[278]



The National Parliament building in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, a neighborhood named after the first Prime Minister of Bengal

The Government of Bangladesh is overseen by a cabinet headed by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The tenure of a parliamentary government is five years. The Bangladesh Civil Service assists the cabinet in running the government. Recruitment for the civil service is based on a public examination.



Bangabhaban (literally Bengal House) is the presidential palace of Bangladesh. It was originally a house for the Viceroy of India and the Governor of Bengal.

In theory, the civil service should be a meritocracy. But a disputed quota system coupled with politicisation and preference for seniority have allegedly affected the civil service's meritocracy.^[279] The President of Bangladesh is the ceremonial head of state^[280] whose powers include signing bills passed by parliament into law. The President is the Supreme Commander of the Bangladesh Armed Forces and the chancellor of all universities. The Supreme Court of Bangladesh is the highest court of the land, followed by the High Court and Appellate Divisions. The head of the judiciary is the Chief Justice of Bangladesh, who sits on the Supreme Court. The courts have wide latitude in judicial review, and judicial precedent is supported by Article 111 of the constitution. The judiciary includes district and metropolitan courts divided into civil and criminal courts. Due to a shortage of judges, the judiciary has a large backlog.



Kamal Hossain, jurist and author of the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh

Supreme Court of Bangladesh

The Jatiya Sangshad (National Parliament) is the unicameral parliament. It has 350 members of parliament (MPs), including 300 MPs elected on the first past the post system and 50 MPs appointed to reserved seats for women's empowerment. Article 70 of the Constitution of Bangladesh forbids MPs from voting against their party. However, several laws proposed independently by MPs have been transformed into legislation, including the anti-torture law.^[281] The parliament is presided over by the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, who is second in line to the president as per the constitution.^[282]

Administrative divisions

Bangladesh is divided into eight administrative divisions,^{[283][253][284]} each named after their respective divisional headquarters: Barisal (officially Barishal^[285]), Chittagong (officially Chattogram^[285]), Dhaka, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Sylhet.

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, 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 in each union (or ward) for a chairperson and several members. In 1997, a parliamentary act was passed to reserve three seats (out of 12) in every union for female candidates.^[286]



Administrative Divisions of Bangladesh

<u>Division</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Area (km²)</u> ^[287]	<u>2021 Population (projected)</u> ^[288]	<u>Density 2021</u>
<u>Barisal Division</u>	<u>Barisal</u>	1 January 1993	13,225	9,713,000	734
<u>Chittagong Division</u>	<u>Chittagong</u>	1 January 1829	33,909	34,747,000	1,025
<u>Dhaka Division</u>	<u>Dhaka</u>	1 January 1829	20,594	42,607,000	2,069
<u>Khulna Division</u>	<u>Khulna</u>	1 October 1960	22,284	18,217,000	817
<u>Mymensingh Division</u>	<u>Mymensingh</u>	14 September 2015	10,584	13,457,000	1,271
<u>Rajshahi Division</u>	<u>Rajshahi</u>	1 January 1829	18,153	21,607,000	1,190
<u>Rangpur Division</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>	25 January 2010	16,185	18,868,000	1,166
<u>Sylhet Division</u>	<u>Sylhet</u>	1 August 1995	12,635	12,463,000	986

Foreign relations

Bangladesh is considered a middle power in global politics.^[289] It plays an important role in the geopolitical affairs of the Indo-Pacific,^[290] due to its strategic location between South and Southeast Asia.^[291] Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth of Nations in 1972 and the United Nations in 1974.^{[292][293]} It relies on multilateral diplomacy on issues like climate change, nuclear nonproliferation, trade policy and non-traditional security issues.^[294] Bangladesh pioneered the creation of SAARC, which has been the preeminent forum for regional diplomacy among the countries of the Indian subcontinent.^[295] It joined the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in 1974,^[296] and is a founding member of the Developing 8 Countries.^[297] In recent years, Bangladesh has focused on promoting regional trade and transport links with support from the World Bank.^[298] Dhaka hosts the headquarters of BIMSTEC, an organisation that brings together countries dependent on the Bay of Bengal.

Relations with neighbouring Myanmar have been severely strained since 2016–2017, after over 700,000 Rohingya refugees illegally entered Bangladesh.^[299] The parliament, government, and civil society of Bangladesh have been at the forefront of international criticism against Myanmar for military operations against the Rohingya, and have demanded their right of return to Arakan.^{[300][301]}

Bangladesh shares an important bilateral and economic relationship with its largest neighbour India,^[302] which is often strained by water politics of the Ganges and the Teesta,^{[303][304][305]} and the border killings of Bangladeshi civilians.^{[306][307]} Post-independent Bangladesh has continued to have a problematic relationship with Pakistan, mainly due to its denial of the 1971 Bangladesh genocide.^[308] It maintains a warm relationship with China, which is its largest trading partner, and the largest arms supplier.^[309] Japan is Bangladesh's largest economic aid provider, and the two maintain a strategic and economic partnership.^[310] Political relations with Middle Eastern countries are robust.^[311] Bangladesh receives 59% of its remittances from the Middle East,^[312] despite poor working conditions affecting over four million Bangladeshi workers.^[313] Bangladesh plays a major role in global climate diplomacy as a leader of the Climate Vulnerable Forum.^[314]

Military

The Bangladesh Armed Forces have inherited the institutional framework of the British military and the British Indian Army.^[315] In 2022, the active personnel strength of the Bangladesh Army was around 250,000,^[316] excluding the Air Force and the Navy (24,000).^[317] In addition to traditional defence roles, the military has supported civil authorities in disaster relief and provided internal security during periods of political unrest. For many years, Bangladesh has been the world's largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces. The military budget of Bangladesh accounts for 1.3% of GDP, amounting to US\$4.3 billion in 2021.^{[318][319]}



Map of Bangladesh UN Peacekeeping Force deployments

The Bangladesh Navy, one of the largest in the Bay of Bengal, includes a fleet of frigates, submarines, corvettes, and other vessels. The Bangladesh Air Force has a small fleet of multi-role combat aircraft. Most of Bangladesh's military equipment comes from China.^[320] In recent years, Bangladesh and India have increased joint military exercises, high-level visits of military leaders, counter-terrorism cooperation and intelligence sharing. Bangladesh is vital to ensuring stability and security in northeast India.^{[321][322]}

Bangladesh's strategic importance in the eastern subcontinent hinges on its proximity to China, its frontier with Burma, the separation of mainland and northeast India, and its maritime territory in the Bay of Bengal.^[323] In 2002, Bangladesh and China signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement.^[324] The United States has pursued negotiations with Bangladesh on a Status of Forces Agreement, an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement and a General Security of Military Information Agreement.^{[325][326][327]} In 2019, Bangladesh ratified the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.^[328]

Civil society

Since the colonial period, Bangladesh has had a prominent civil society. There are various special interest groups, including non-governmental organisations, human rights organisations, professional associations, chambers of commerce, employers' associations, and trade unions.^[329] The National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh was set up in 2007. Notable human rights organisations and initiatives include the Centre for Law and Mediation, Odhikar, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council and the War Crimes Fact Finding Committee. The world's largest international NGO BRAC is based in Bangladesh. There have been concerns regarding the shrinking space for independent civil society in recent years.^{[330][331][332]}

Human rights

Torture is banned by the Constitution of Bangladesh,^[333] but is rampantly used by Bangladesh's security forces. Bangladesh joined the Convention against Torture in 1998 and it enacted its first anti-torture law, the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, in 2013. The first conviction under this law was announced in 2020.^[334] Amnesty International Prisoners of Conscience from Bangladesh have included Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Shahidul Alam.^{[335][336]} The widely criticized Digital Security Act was repealed and replaced by the Cyber Security Act in 2023.^[337] The repeal was welcomed by the International Press Institute.^[338]

On International Human Rights Day in December 2021, the United States Department of Treasury announced sanctions on commanders of the Rapid Action Battalion for extrajudicial killings, torture, and other human rights abuses.^[339] Freedom House has criticised the government for human rights abuses, the crackdown on the opposition, mass media, and civil society through politicized enforcement.^[340] Bangladesh is ranked "partly free" in Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* report,^[341] but its press freedom has deteriorated from "free" to "not free" in recent years due to increasing pressure from the government.^[342] According to the British Economist Intelligence Unit, the country has a hybrid regime: the third of four rankings in its Democracy Index.^[343] Bangladesh was ranked 96th among 163 countries in the 2022 Global Peace Index.^[344] According to National Human Rights Commission, 70% of alleged human-rights violations are committed by law-enforcement agencies.^[345]



The Rapid Action Battalion has been sanctioned by the United States for human rights abuses.

LGBT rights are frowned upon among social conservatives.^[346] Homosexuality is affected by Section 377 of the Penal Code of Bangladesh, which was originally enacted by the British colonial government.^{[347][348]} An underground LGBT scene is flourishing across the country. However, Bangladesh only recognises the local transgender community known as the Hijra, which is the most widely accepted LGBT group among poorer sections of society.^{[349][350]} Organized crime by the Hijra is growing, with blackmailing and extortion rackets operating on Grindr and resulting in theft, murder and kidnapping.^{[351][352]} According to the 2016 Global Slavery Index, an estimated 1,531,300 people are enslaved in Bangladesh, or roughly 1% of the population.^{[353][354][355][356]}

Corruption

Like many developing countries, institutional corruption is an issue of concern for Bangladesh. Bangladesh was ranked 146th among 180 countries on Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index.^[357] Land administration was the sector with the most bribery in 2015,^[358] followed by education,^[359] police^[360] and water supply.^[361] The Anti Corruption Commission was formed in 2004, and it was active during the 2006–08 Bangladeshi political crisis, indicting many leading politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen for graft.^{[362][363][364]}

Economy

Bangladesh is the second largest economy in South Asia after India.^{[235][236]} The country has outpaced India and Pakistan in terms of per capita income.^{[237][236]} According to the World Bank, "when the newly independent country of Bangladesh was born on December 16, 1971, it was the second poorest country in the world—making the country's transformation over the next 50 years one of the great development stories. Since then, poverty has been cut in half at record speed. Enrollment in primary school is now nearly universal. Hundreds of thousands of women have entered the workforce. Steady progress has been made on maternal and child health. And the country is better buttressed against the destructive forces posed by climate change and natural disasters. Bangladesh's success comprises many moving parts—from investing in human capital to establishing macroeconomic stability. Building on this success, the country is now setting the stage for further economic growth and job creation by ramping up investments in energy, inland connectivity, urban projects, and transport infrastructure, as well as focusing on climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness on its path toward sustainable growth."^[365] Bangladesh has made one of the greatest leaps on the Human Development Index among Asian countries. According to UNDP, "Asia and the Pacific has observed the fastest Human Development Index (HDI) progress in the world—with Bangladesh being one of the best performers, moving from an HDI of 0.397 in 1990, the fourth lowest in the region, to a HDI of 0.661 in 2021. Only China had greater improvements in the region over this period".^[366]



Office blocks on Kemal Ataturk Avenue in Dhaka

In 2022, Bangladesh had the second largest foreign-exchange reserves in South Asia. The reserves have boosted the government's spending capacity despite tax revenues forming only 7.7% of government revenue.^[367] A big chunk of investments have gone into the power sector. In 2009, Bangladesh was experiencing daily blackouts several times a day. In 2022, the country achieved 100% electrification.^{[368][369][370]} One of the major anti-poverty schemes of the Bangladeshi government is the Ashrayan Project which aims to eradicate homelessness by providing free housing.^[371] The poverty rate has gone down from 80% in 1971,^[372] to 44.2% in 1991,^[373] to 12.9% in 2021.^[232] The literacy rate was 74.66% in 2022.^[374] Bangladesh has a labor force of roughly 70 million,^[375] which is the world's seventh-largest; with an unemployment rate of 5.2% as of 2021.^[376] The government is setting up 100 special economic zones to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and generate 10 million jobs.^[377] The Bangladesh



Chittagong has the busiest port on the Bay of Bengal.

Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) have been established to help investors in setting up factories; and to complement the longstanding Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA).

The Bangladeshi taka is the national currency. The service sector accounts for about 51.3% of total GDP and employs 39% of the workforce. The industrial sector accounts for 35.1% of GDP and employs 20.4% of the workforce. The agriculture sector makes up 13.6% of the economy but is the biggest employment sector, with 40.6% of the workforce.^[367] In agriculture, the country is a major producer of rice, fish, tea, fruits, vegetables, flowers,^[378] and jute. Lobsters and shrimps are some of Bangladesh's well-known exports.^[379]

Private sector

The private sector accounts for 80% of GDP compared to the dwindling role of state-owned companies.^[380] Bangladesh's economy is dominated by family-owned conglomerates and small and medium-sized businesses. Some of the largest publicly traded companies in Bangladesh include Beximco, BRAC Bank, BSRM, GPH Ispat, Grameenphone, Summit Group, and Square Pharmaceuticals.^[381] Capital markets include the Dhaka Stock Exchange and the Chittagong Stock Exchange. Its telecommunications industry is one of the world's fastest-growing, with 171.854 million cellphone subscribers in January 2021.^[382] Over 80% of Bangladesh's export earnings come from the garments industry.^[8] Other major industries include shipbuilding, pharmaceuticals, steel, ceramics, electronics, and leather goods.^[383] Muhammad Aziz Khan became the first person from Bangladesh to be listed as a billionaire by Forbes.^[384]

Infrastructure

Since 2009, Bangladesh has embarked on a series of megaprojects. For instance, the 6.15 km long Padma Bridge was built for US\$3.86 billion.^[386] The bridge was the first self-financed megaproject in the country's history.^[387] Other megaprojects include the Dhaka Metro, a mass rapid-transit system in the capital; Karnaphuli Tunnel, an underwater expressway in Chittagong; Dhaka Elevated Expressway; Chittagong Elevated Expressway; and the Bangladesh Delta Plan, designed to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Tourism

The tourism industry is expanding, contributing some 3.02% of total GDP.^[388] Bangladesh's international tourism receipts in 2019 amounted to \$391 million.^[389] The country has three UNESCO World Heritage Sites (the Mosque City, the Paharpur Buddhist Ruins and the Sundarbans) and five tentative-list sites.^[390]

Activities for tourists include angling, water skiing, river cruising, hiking, rowing, yachting, and beachgoing.^{[391][392]} The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported in 2019 that the travel and tourism industry in Bangladesh directly generated 1,180,500 jobs in 2018 or 1.9% of the country's total



The Padma Bridge is a road-rail bridge which spans the Bangladeshi branch of the Ganges that is known as the Padma River. It is the longest bridge on the Ganges. When it was opened in June 2022, the bridge was expected to boost GDP by 1.23%.^[385]

employment.^[393] According to the same report, Bangladesh experiences around 125,000 international tourist arrivals per year.^[393] Domestic spending generated 97.7 percent of direct travel and tourism gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012.^[394]

Energy

Bangladesh is gradually transitioning to a green economy. It has the largest off-grid solar power programme in the world, benefiting 20 million people.^[395] An electric car called the *Palki* is being developed for production in the country.^[396] Biogas is being used to produce organic fertilizer.^[397]

Bangladesh continues to have huge untapped reserves of natural gas, particularly in its maritime territory.^{[398][399]} A lack of exploration and decreasing proven reserves have forced Bangladesh to import LNG from abroad.^{[400][401][402]} Gas shortages were further exasperated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.^[403]



Wind turbines on Kutubdia Island

While government-owned companies in Bangladesh generate nearly half of Bangladesh's electricity, privately owned companies like the Summit Group and Orion Group are playing an increasingly important role in both generating electricity, and supplying machinery, reactors, and equipment.^[404] Bangladesh increased electricity production from 5 gigawatts in 2009 to 25.5 gigawatts in 2022. It plans to produce 50 gigawatts by 2041. U.S. companies like Chevron and General Electric supply around 55% of Bangladesh's domestic natural gas production and are among the largest investors in power projects. 80% of Bangladesh's installed gas-fired power generation capacity comes from turbines manufactured in the United States.^[405]

The government stopped buying spot price LNG in June 2022. The country's forex reserves declined due to surging fuel imports. Bangladesh imported 30% of its LNG on the spot price market in 2022, down from 40% in 2021. Bangladesh continues to trade in LNG on the futures exchange markets.^[406]

The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Bangladesh's first operational nuclear plant, is nearing completion as of the end of 2023.^[407]

Demographics

According to the 2022 Census, Bangladesh has a population of 165.1 million,^[9] and is the eighth-most-populous country in the world, the fifth-most populous country in Asia, and the most densely populated large country in the world, with a headline population density of 1,265 people/km² as of 2020.^[410] Its total fertility rate (TFR), once among the highest in the world, has experienced a dramatic decline, from 5.5 in 1985 to 3.7 in 1995, down to 2.0 in 2020,^[411] which is below the sub-replacement fertility of 2.1.^[412] The majority of Bangladeshis live in rural areas, with only 39% of




Population (millions)		
Year	Pop.	±% p.a.
1971	67,800,000	—
1980	80,600,000	+1.94%
1990	105,300,001	+2.71%
2000	129,600,000	+2.10%
2010	148,700,000	+1.38%
2012	161,100,200	+4.09%
2022	165,160,000	+0.25%
Source: OECD/World Bank ^{[408][409]}		

the population living in urban areas as of 2021.^[413] It has a median age of roughly 28 years, with 26% of the total population aged 14 or younger,^[414] and merely 5% aged 65 and above.^[415]

Bangladesh is an ethnically and culturally homogeneous society, as Bengalis form 99% of the population.^[409] The Adivasi population includes the Chakmas, Marmas, Santhals, Mros, Tanchangyas, Bawms, Tripuris, Khasis, Khumis, Kukis, Garos, and Bisnupriya Manipuris. The Chittagong Hill Tracts region experienced unrest and an insurgency from 1975 to 1997 in an autonomy movement by its indigenous people. Although a peace accord was signed in 1997, the region remains militarised.^[416] Urdu-speaking stranded Pakistanis were given citizenship by the Supreme Court in 2008.^[417] Bangladesh also hosts over 700,000 Rohingya refugees since 2017, giving it one of the largest refugee populations in the world.^[299]

Urban centres

Bangladesh's capital Dhaka and the largest city and is overseen by two city corporations that manage between them the northern and southern parts of the city. There are 12 city corporations which hold mayoral elections: Dhaka South, Dhaka North, Chittagong, Comilla, Khulna, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Barisal, Rangpur, Gazipur and Narayanganj. But there are 8 district's in total. There being 8 districts in total. They are- Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Mymensingh, Barishal. Mayors are elected for five-year terms. Altogether there are 506 urban centres in Bangladesh which 43 cities have a population of more than 100,000.

Largest cities or towns in Bangladesh			
[1] (http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b343a8b4_956b_45ca_872f_4cf9b2f1a6e0/2022-07-28-14-31-b21f81d1c15171f1770c661020381666.pdf)			
	Rank	Name	Pop.
	1	Dhaka	10,278,882
	2	Chittagong	3,227,246
	3	Gazipur	2,674,697
	4	Narayanganj	967,724
	5	Khulna	718,735
	6	Rangpur	708,384
	7	Mymensingh	576,722
	8	Rajshahi	552,791
	9	Sylhet	532,426
	10	Cumilla	439,414
			Gazipur
			Narayanganj

Language

The official and predominant language of Bangladesh is Bengali, which is spoken by more than 99% of the population as their native language.^{[418][419]} Bengali is described as a dialect continuum where there are various dialects spoken throughout the country. There is a diglossia in which much of the population can understand or speak Standard Colloquial Bengali, and their regional dialects.^[420] These include Chittagonian or Sylheti, though some linguists consider them as separate languages.^[419]

English plays an important role in Bangladesh's judicial and educational affairs, due to the country's history as part of the British Empire. It is widely spoken and commonly understood, and is taught as a compulsory subject in all schools, colleges and universities, while the English-medium educational system is widely attended.^[421]

Tribal languages, although increasingly endangered, include the Chakma language, another native Eastern Indo-Aryan language, spoken by the Chakma people. Others are Garó, Meitei, Kokborok and Rakhine. Among the Austroasiatic languages, the most spoken is the Santali language, native to the Santal people.^[422]

The stranded Pakistanis and some sections of the Old Dhakaites often use Urdu as their native tongue. Still, the usage of the latter remains highly reproached.^[423]

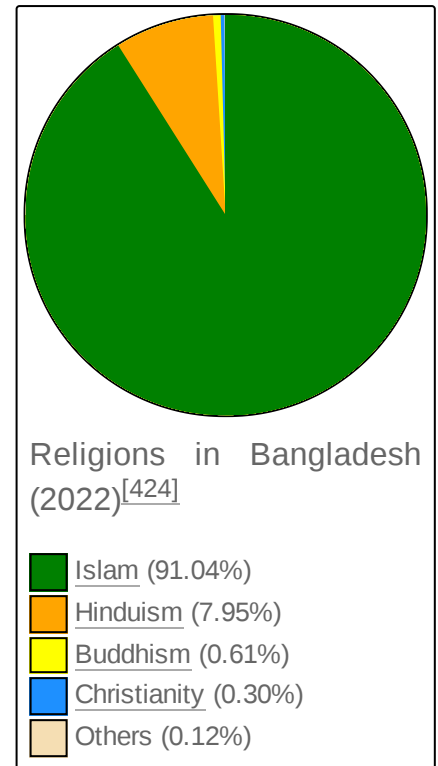
Religion

Bangladesh was constitutionally proclaimed as a secular state in 1972. It grants freedom of religion, ensures separation of church and state, and claims to be "secular in practise" while establishing Islam as the state religion.^{[425][426][427][428]} The constitution bans religion-based politics and discrimination, and proclaims equal recognition of people adhering to all faiths.^[429] Islam is the largest religion across the country, being followed by about 91.1% of the population.^{[409][430][431]} The vast majority of Bangladeshi citizens are Bengali Muslims, adhering to Sunni Islam. The country is the third-most populous Muslim-majority state in the world and has the fourth-largest overall Muslim population.^[432]

Before the partition of India in 1941, Hindus formed 28% of the population. After the formation of Bangla Desh, the Hindus were 13.50% in 1974. After the independence there was a drastic decrease of the Hindus and are main minorities in the Bangladesh. In 2022, Hinduism is followed by 7.9% of the population,^{[409][430][431]} mainly by the Bengali Hindus, who form the country's second-largest religious group and the third-largest Hindu community globally, after those in India and Nepal. Buddhism is the third-largest religion, at 0.6% of the population. Bangladeshi Buddhists are concentrated among the tribal ethnic groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. At the same time, coastal Chittagong is home to many Bengali Buddhists. Christianity is the fourth-largest religion at 0.3%, followed mainly by a small Bengali Christian minority. 0.1% of the population practices other religions like Animism or is irreligious.^{[409][433]}

Education

The constitution states that all children shall receive free and compulsory education.^[434] Education in Bangladesh is overseen by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is responsible for implementing policy for primary education and state-funded schools at a local level. Primary and secondary education is compulsory, and is financed by the state and free of charge in public schools. Bangladesh has a literacy rate of 74.7% per cent as of 2019: 77.4% for males and 71.9% for females.^{[435][436]} The country's educational system is three-tiered and heavily subsidised, with the government operating many schools at the primary, secondary and higher



secondary levels and subsidising many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the Bangladeshi government funds over 45 state universities^[437] through the University Grants Commission (UGC), created by Presidential Order 10 in 1973.^[438]

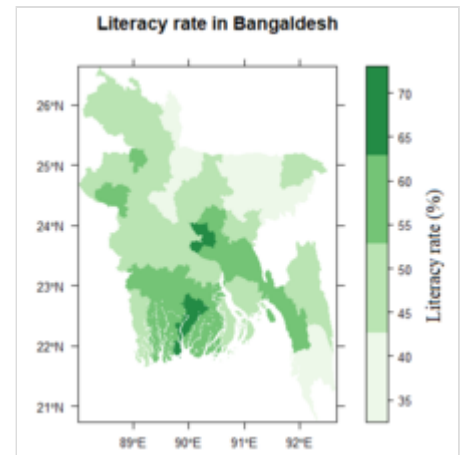
The education system is divided into five levels: primary (first to fifth grade), junior secondary (sixth to eighth grade), secondary (ninth and tenth grade), higher secondary (11th and 12th grade), and tertiary which is university level.^[439] According to Hossain 2016, the formal schooling of secondary education in Bangladesh is seven years. The first three years are called junior secondary and include grades six to eight. The next two years are called secondary and include grades nine and ten. The final two years are called higher secondary and include grade eleven and twelve. Based on the information from Hossain 2016 and Daily Star 2010, to pass the fifth grade the Bangladesh Education Ministry requires a public exam called Primary School Certificate (PSC). During the eighth grade students have to pass the Junior School Certificate (JSC) exam to get enrolled in ninth grade, while tenth-grade students have to pass the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam to proceed to eleventh grade. Lastly, students have to pass the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exam at grade twelve to apply for university.^{[440][441]}

Universities in Bangladesh are of three general types: public (government-owned and subsidised), private (privately owned universities) and international (operated and funded by international organisations). The country has 47 public,^[437] 105 private^[442] and two international universities; Bangladesh National University has the largest enrolment, and the University of Dhaka (established in 1921) is the oldest. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) is a premiere university for engineering education. University of Chittagong, established in 1966, has the largest campus.^[443] Dhaka College, established in 1841, is the oldest educational institution for higher education in Bangladesh.^[444] Medical education is provided by 29 government and private medical colleges. All medical colleges are affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Bangladesh was ranked 105th in the Global Innovation Index in 2023.^[445]

Health

Bangladesh, by the constitution, guarantees healthcare services as a fundamental right to all of its citizens.^[447] The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the largest institutional healthcare provider in Bangladesh,^[448] and contains two divisions: Health Service Division and Medical Education And Family Welfare Division.^[449] However, healthcare facilities in Bangladesh are considered less than adequate, although they have improved as the economy has grown and poverty levels have decreased significantly.^[448] Bangladesh faces a severe health workforce crisis, as formally trained providers make up a small percentage of the total health



Literacy rates in Bangladesh districts



Historical development of life expectancy in Bangladesh, displaying significant strides since independence^[446]

workforce.^[450] Significant deficiencies in the treatment practices of village doctors persist, with widespread harmful and inappropriate drug prescribing.^[451]

Bangladesh's poor healthcare system suffers from severe underfunding from the government.^[448] As of 2019, some 2.48% of total GDP was attributed to healthcare,^[452] and domestic general government spending on healthcare was 18.63% of the total budget,^[453] while out-of-pocket expenditures made up the vast majority of the total budget, totalling 72.68%.^[454] Domestic private health expenditure was about 75% of the total healthcare expenditure.^[455] As of 2020, there are only 5.3 doctors per 10,000 people, and about six physicians^[456] and three nurses per 10,000 people, while the number of hospital beds is 8 per 10,000.^{[457][458]} The overall life expectancy in Bangladesh at birth was 73 years (71 years for males and 75 years for females) as of 2020,^[459] and it has a comparably high infant mortality rate (24 per 1,000 live births) and child mortality rate (29 per 1,000 live births).^{[460][461]} Maternal mortality remains high, clocking at 173 per 100,000 live births.^[462] Bangladesh is a key source market for medical tourism for various countries, mainly India,^[463] due to its citizens dissatisfaction and distrust over their own healthcare system.^[464]

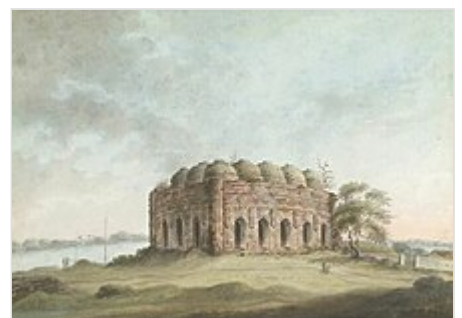
The main causes of death are coronary artery disease, stroke, and chronic respiratory disease; comprising 62% and 60% of all adult male and female deaths, respectively.^[465] Malnutrition is a major and persistent problem in Bangladesh, mainly affecting the rural regions, more than half of the population suffers from it. Severe acute malnutrition affects 450,000 children, while nearly 2 million children have moderate acute malnutrition. For children under the age of five, 52% are affected by anaemia, 41% are stunted, 16% are wasted, and 36% are underweight. A quarter of women are underweight and around 15% have short stature, while over half also suffer from anaemia.^[466]

Culture

Architecture

The architectural traditions of Bangladesh have a 2,500-year-old heritage.^[467] Terracotta architecture is a distinct feature of Bengal. Pre-Islamic Bengali architecture reached its pinnacle in 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 Sixty Dome Mosque was the largest medieval mosque built in Bangladesh and is a fine example of Turkic-Bengali architecture.^[468] The Mughal style replaced indigenous architecture when Bengal became a province of the Mughal Empire and influenced urban housing development. 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.



Mosque in the 15th century in a Bengali style

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 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 recent times, award-winning architects like Rafiq Azam have set the course of contemporary architecture by adopting influences from the works of Islam and Kahn.

Visual arts and crafts

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, notable sculptural Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist art developed in the Pala Empire and the Sena dynasty. Islamic art has evolved since the 14th century. The architecture of the Bengal Sultanate saw a distinct style of domed mosques with complex niche pillars that had 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 motifs) and Western textile art (paisley). The Jamdani weavers in Dhaka received imperial patronage.^[469] Ivory and brass were also widely used in Mughal art. Pottery is thoroughly used in Bengali culture.



Embroidery on Nakshi kantha (embroidered quilt), a centuries-old Bengali art tradition

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 the art movements in West Bengal. The Art Institute Dhaka has been a significant centre for 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 the country's pioneers of modernist sculpture.

In recent times, photography as a medium of art has become popular. Biennial Chobi Mela is considered the largest photography festival in Asia.^[470]

Literature

Bengali literature is a millennium-old tradition; the Charyapadas 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. Sultans of Bengal patronized Bengali literature.

Examples include the writings of Maladhar Basu, Bipradas Pipilai, Vijay Gupta, and Yasoraj Khan. The Chandidas are notable lyric poets from the early Medieval Age. Syed Alaol was the bard of Middle Bengali literature. The Bengal Renaissance shaped 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.^[471] Kazi Nazrul Islam was a revolutionary poet who espoused political rebellion against colonialism and fascism. Begum Rokeya is regarded as the pioneer feminist writer of Bangladesh.^[472] Other renaissance icons included Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. The writer Syed Mujtaba Ali is noted for his cosmopolitan Bengali worldview.^[473] Jasimuddin was a renowned pastoral poet.



Syed Mujtaba Ali

Shamsur Rahman and Al Mahmud are considered two of the greatest Bengali poets to have emerged in the 20th century. Farrukh Ahmad, Sufia Kamal, Syed Ali Ahsan, Ahsan Habib, Abul Hussain, Shahid Qadri, Fazal Shahabuddin, Abu Zafar Obaidullah, Omar Ali, Al Mujahidi, Syed Shamsul Huq, Nirmalendu Goon, Abid Azad, Hasan Hafizur Rahman and Abdul Hye Sikder are important figures of modern Bangladeshi poetry. Ahmed Sofa is regarded as the most important Bangladeshi intellectual in the post-independence era. Humayun Ahmed was a popular writer of modern Bangladeshi magical realism and science fiction. Notable writers of Bangladeshi fictions include Mir Mosharraf Hossain, Akhteruzzaman Elias, Alauddin Al Azad, Shahidul Zahir, Rashid Karim, Mahmudul Haque, Syed Waliullah, Shahidullah Kaiser, Shawkat Osman, Selina Hossain, Shahed Ali, Razia Khan, Anisul Hoque, and Abdul Mannan Syed.

The annual Ekushey Book Fair and Dhaka Literature Festival, organised by the Bangla Academy, are among the enormous literary festivals in South Asia.

Museums and libraries

Established in 1910, the Varendra Research Museum is the oldest museum in Bangladesh.^{[474][475]} 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 civilisation, and Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian manuscripts and inscriptions.^{[476][477]}



The Varendra Research Museum in Rajshahi, maintained by Rajshahi University^[474]

The Ahsan Manzil, the former residence of the Nawab of Dhaka, is a national museum housing collections from the British Raj.^{[477][478]}

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 Shahbagh, Dhaka, and has a rich collection of antiquities. The Liberation War Museum documents the Bangladeshi struggle for independence and the 1971 genocide.

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.



Bangladesh National Museum in Dhaka

The Northbrook Hall Public Library was established in Dhaka in 1882 in honour of Lord Northbrook, the Governor-General. Other libraries inaugurated 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.^[479] The Central Public Library of Dhaka was established in 1959. The National Library of Bangladesh was established in 1972. The World Literature Centre, 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.

Women

Although as of 2015, several women occupied a key political office in Bangladesh, its women continue to live under a patriarchal social regime where violence is common.^[480] Whereas in India and Pakistan, women participate less in the workforce as their education increases, the reverse is the case in Bangladesh.^[480]



Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain

Bengal has a long history of feminist activism dating back to the 19th century. Begum Rokeya and Faizunnessa Chowdhurani played an important role in emancipating Bengali Muslim women from purdah, before the country's division, as well as 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.

In 2008, Bangladeshi female workforce participation stood at 26%.^[480] According to a report published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in March 2023, the female labour force participation rate has reached to 42.68%.^[481] in 2022 Women dominate blue collar jobs in the Bangladeshi garment industry. Agriculture, social services, healthcare, and education are chosen occupations for Bangladeshi women, while their employment in white collar positions has steadily increased.

Performing arts

Theatre in Bangladesh includes various forms with a history dating back to the 4th century CE.^[482] It includes narrative forms, song and dance forms, supra-personae forms, performances with scroll paintings, puppet theatre and processional forms.^[482] 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 Manipuri dances.

The music of Bangladesh features the Baul mystical tradition, listed by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage.^[483] Fakir Lalon Shah popularised Baul music in the country in the 18th century and it has since been one of the most popular music genres in the country since then. Most modern Bauls are devoted to Lalon Shah.^[484] Numerous lyric-based musical traditions, varying from one region to the next, exist, including Gombhira, Bhatiali and Bhawaiya. Folk music is accompanied by a one-stringed instrument known as the ektara. Other instruments include the dotara, dhol, flute, and tabla. Bengali classical music includes Tagore songs and Nazrul Sangeet. Bangladesh has a rich tradition of Indian classical music, which uses instruments like the sitar, tabla, sarod, and santoor.^[485] Sabina Yasmin and Runa Laila were considered the leading playback singers in the 1990s, while musicians such as Ayub Bachchu and James are credited with popularising rock music in Bangladesh.^{[486][487]}



A Baul playing the ektara at Lalon Shah's shrine in Kushtia

Media and cinema

The Bangladeshi press is diverse and privately owned. Over 200 newspapers are published in the country. Bangladesh Betar is a state-run radio service.^[488] 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 a state-owned television network. 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 the harassment of journalists.



Anwar Hossain playing Siraj-ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal, in the 1967 film Nawab Sirajuddaulah

The cinema of Bangladesh dates back to 1898 when films began screening at the Crown Theatre in Dhaka. The Dhaka Nawab Family patronised 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 *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 Dhaka. 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 assassinated in 1971. Tareque Masud is regarded as one of Bangladesh's outstanding directors.^{[489][490]} Masud was honoured by FIPRESCI at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for his film *The Clay Bird*. Tanvir Mokammel, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Humayun Ahmed, Alamgir Kabir, Chashi Nazrul Islam and Sohanur Rahman Sohan, who was best known in Dhallywood for directing romantic films.^[491] His film *Ananta Bhalobasha* released in

1999 marked a turning point in Bangladeshi cinema by introducing Shakib Khan, who is now one of the biggest superstars in the industry,^[492] are some of the prominent directors of Bangladeshi cinema. Bangladesh has a very active film society culture. It started in 1963 in Dhaka. Now around 40 Film Societies are active all over Bangladesh. Federation of Film Societies of Bangladesh is the parent organisation of the film society movement of Bangladesh. Active film societies include the Rainbow Film Society, Children's Film Society, Moviyaana Film Society, and Dhaka University Film Society.

Textiles

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 women. Mughal Dhaka was renowned for producing the finest muslin saris, as well as the famed Dhakai and Jamdani, the weaving of which is listed by UNESCO as one of the masterpieces of humanity's intangible cultural heritage.^[493] Bangladesh also produces the Rajshahi silk. The shalwar kameez is also widely worn by Bangladeshi women. In urban areas, some women can be seen in Western clothing. The kurta and sherwani are the national dress of Bangladeshi men; the lungi and dhoti are worn in informal settings. Aside from ethnic wear, domestically tailored suits and neckties are customarily worn by the country's men in offices, in schools, and at social events.

The handloom industry supplies 60–65% of the country's clothing demand.^[494] The Bengali ethnic fashion industry has flourished. The retailer Aarong is one of South Asia's most successful ethnic wear brands. The development of the Bangladesh textile industry, which supplies leading international brands, has promoted the local production and retail of modern Western attire. The country now has several expanding local brands like Westecs and Yellow. Bangladesh is the world's second-largest garment exporter. Among Bangladesh's fashion designers, Bibi Russell has received international acclaim for her "Fashion for Development" shows.^[495]



A ramp walk by a model during a fashion show in Bangladesh in 2012

Cuisine

Bangladeshi cuisine, formed by its geographic location and climate, is rich and diverse; sharing its culinary heritage with the neighbouring Indian state of West Bengal.^{[496]:14} The staple dish is white rice, which along with fish, forms the culinary base. Varieties of leaf vegetables, potatoes, gourds and lentils (dal) also play an important role. Curries of beef, mutton, chicken and duck are commonly consumed,^[497] along with multiple types of bhortas (mashed vegetables),^[498] bhajis (stir fried vegetables) and tarkaris (curried vegetables).^{[496]:8} Mughal-influenced dishes include kormas, kalias, biryanis, pulaos, teharis and khichuris.^[497]

Among the various used spices, turmeric, fenugreek, nigella, coriander, anise, cardamom and chili powder are widely used; a famous spice mix is the panch phoron. Condiments and herbs used include red onions, green chillies, garlic,



Panta bhat with Hilsa fish, a popular dish consumed on Pahela Baishakh (Bengali New Year)

ginger, cilantro, and mint.^{[496]:12} Coconut milk, mustard paste, mustard seeds, mustard oil, ghee, achar^[497] and chutneys are also widely used in the cuisine.^{[496]:13–14}

Fish is the main source of protein, owing to the country's riverine geography, and it is often enjoyed with its roe. The hilsa is the national fish and is immensely popular; a famous dish is shorshe ilish. Other highly consumed fishes include rohu, pangas, and tilapia.^[499] Lobsters, shrimps and dried fish (*shutki*) also play an important role, with the chingri malai curry being a famous shrimp dish.^{[496]:8} In Chittagong, famous dishes include kala bhuna and mezbani, the latter being a traditionally popular feast, featuring the serving of *mezbanî gosht*, a hot and spicy beef curry.^{[496]:10}^[497]^[500] In Sylhet, the *shatkora* lemons are used to marinate dishes, a notable one is beef hatkora.^[500] Among the tribal communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, cooking with bamboo shoots is popular.^[501] Khulna is renowned for using *chui jhal* (piper chaba) in its meat-based dishes.^[500]^[497]



Egg Chittoi Pitha



Puri, Bangladeshi Local Food



Kacchi Biryani, a popular dish originating in the capital Dhaka

Bangladesh has a vast spread of desserts, including distinctive sweets such as the *rôshogolla*, *roshmalai*, *chomchom*, *sondesh*, *mishti doi* and *kalojaam*, and *jilapi*.^[502] Pithas are traditional boiled desserts made with rice or fruits.^[503] Halwa and shemai, the latter being a variation of vermicelli; are popular desserts during religious festivities.^[504]^[505] Ruti, naan, paratha, luchi and bakarkhani are the main local breads.^[506]^[497] Hot milk tea is the most commonly consumed beverage in the country, being the centre of addas.^[507] Borhani, mattha and lassi are popular traditionally consumed beverages.^[508]^[509] Kebabs are widely popular, particularly seekh kebab, chapli kebab, shami kebab, chicken tikka and shashlik, along with various types of chaaps.^[497] Popular street foods include chotpoti, jhal muri, shingara,^[510] samosa and fuchka.^[511]

Holidays and festivals

Pahela Baishakh, the Bengali new year, is the major festival of Bengali culture and sees widespread festivities. Of the major holidays celebrated in Bangladesh, only Pahela Baishakh comes without any pre-existing expectations (specific religious identity, a culture of gift-giving, etc.) and has become an occasion for celebrating the simpler, rural roots of Bengal. Other cultural festivals include Nabonno and Poush Parbon, Bengali harvest festivals.^[512]

The Muslim festivals of Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Mawlid, 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 the Christian festival of Christmas are national holidays in Bangladesh and see the most widespread celebrations in the country. The two Eids are celebrated with a long streak of public holidays and allow celebrating the festivals with their families outside the city.^[512]

Alongside national days like the remembrance of 21 February 1952 Language Movement Day (declared as International Mother Language Day by UNESCO in 1999),^[513] 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. Similar gatherings are observed at the National Martyrs' Memorial on Independence Day and Victory Day to remember the national heroes of the Bangladesh Liberation War.^[514]



A fair in Comilla

Sports

In rural Bangladesh, several traditional indigenous sports such as Kabaddi, Boli Khela, Lathi Khela and Nouka Baich remain fairly popular. While Kabaddi is the national sport,^[515] Cricket is the most popular sport in the country. The national cricket team participated in their first Cricket World Cup in 1999 and the following year was granted Test cricket status. Bangladesh reached the quarter-final of the 2015 Cricket World Cup, the semi-final of the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy and they reached the final of the Asia Cup 3 times – in 2012, 2016, and 2018. Shakib Al Hasan is widely regarded as one of the greatest All-rounders in the history of Cricket and as one of the greatest Bangladeshi sportsman ever.^{[516][517][518][519][520][521]} On 9 February 2020, the Bangladesh youth national cricket team won the men's Under-19 Cricket World Cup, held in South Africa. This was Bangladesh's first World Cup victory.^{[522][523]} In 2018, the Bangladesh women's national cricket team won the 2018 Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup defeating India women's national cricket team in the final.^[524]



Bangladesh cricket team

Football is also a leading sport in Bangladesh.^[525] Although football was seen as the most popular sport in the country before the 21st century, success in cricket has overshadowed its previous popularity. The first instance of a national football team was the emergence of the Shadhin Bangla Team, which played friendly matches throughout India to raise international awareness about the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971.^[526] On 26 July 1971, the team's captain, Zakaria Pintoo, became the first person to hoist the Bangladesh flag on foreign land before their match in Nadia district of West Bengal.^[527] Following independence, the national football team participated in the AFC Asian Cup (1980), becoming only the second South Asian team to do so.^[528] Bangladesh's most notable achievements in football include the 2003 SAFF Gold Cup and 1999 South Asian Games. In 2022, the Bangladesh women's national football team won the 2022 SAFF Women's Championship.^{[529][530]}



Bangladesh football team

Bangladesh archers Ety Khatun and Roman Sana won several gold medals winning all the 10 archery events (both individual and team events) in the 2019 South Asian Games.^[531] The National Sports Council regulates 42 sporting federations.^[532] Chess is very popular in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has five

grandmasters in chess. Among them, Niaz Murshed was the first grandmaster in South Asia.^[533] In 2010, mountain climber Musa Ibrahim became the first Bangladeshi climber to conquer Mount Everest.^[534] Wasfia Nazreen is the first Bangladeshi climber to climb the Seven Summits.^[535]

Bangladesh hosts several international tournaments. Bangabandhu Cup is an international football tournament hosted in the country. Bangladesh hosted the South Asian Games several times. Bangladesh co-hosted the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 with India and Sri Lanka in 2011. Bangladesh solely hosted the 2014 ICC World Twenty20 championship. Bangladesh hosted the Cricket Asia Cup in 2000, 2012, 2014 and 2016. Bangladesh has also hosted the 1985 Men's Hockey Asia Cup.^[536]

See also



- [Index of Bangladesh-related articles](#)
- [Outline of Bangladesh](#)
- East Bengal

Notes

- a. /bæŋglə'deʃ, ˌbɑːŋ-/-; Bengali: বাংলাদেশ, romanized: *Bāñlādēś*, pronounced [ˈbanla.deʃ]
 b. Bengali: গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ, romanized: *Gôṇôprôjātôntri Bāñlādēś*, pronounced [ɡɔnɔprodʒatɔntri ˌbanladeʃ]

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-  Geographic data related to [Bangladesh \(https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/184640\)](https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/184640) at OpenStreetMap
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