

## BANGLADESH: An Overview

### *Historical*

#### *Background*

The history of Bangladesh is an eventful combination of turmoil and peace, as well as prosperity and destitution. It has thrived under the glow of cultural splendor and suffered under the ravages of war. The territory now constituting Bangladesh was under the Muslim rule over five and a half centuries from 1201 to 1757 A.D. Then it was ruled by the British, after the defeat of the last sovereign ruler of Bengal, Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah, at the Battle of Plassey on the fateful day of June 23, 1757. The British ruled over the entire Indian sub-continent including this territory for nearly 190 years from 1757 to 1947. During that period Bangladesh was a part of the British Indian provinces of Bengal and Assam. With the termination of the British rule in August, 1947 the sub-continent was partitioned into India and Pakistan. Bangladesh then became a part of Pakistan and was named as East Pakistan. It remained so far about 24 years from August 14, 1947 to March 25, 1971. It appeared on the world map as an independent and sovereign state named Bangladesh on December 16, 1971 following victory at the War of Liberation (from March 25 to December 16, 1971).

### *Geographical*

Bangladesh lies in the north eastern part of South Asia between  $20^{\circ} 34'$  and  $26^{\circ} 38'$  north latitude and  $88^{\circ} 01'$  and  $92^{\circ} 41'$  east longitude. The country is bounded by India on the west-north and north-east while Myanmar on the south-east and the Bay of Bengal on the south. The area of the country is 56,977 sq. miles or 1, 47,570 sq. k.m. The limits of territorial water area of Bangladesh are 12 nautical miles and the area of the high seas extending to 200 nautical miles measured from the base lines constitutes the economic zone of the country. Bangladesh won in Arbitral Tribunal/PCA more than 1, 18,813 square kilometers of waters comprising territorial sea, exclusive economic zone extending out to 200 NM across sizable area, and also has undeniable sovereign rights in the sea bed extending as far as 354 NM from Chattogram coast in the Bay of Bengal with all the living and non living resources. To achieve an equitable result, the tribunal awarded Bangladesh 19,467sq km of area out of total disputed area of 25,602 sq km (approx).

### *Physiography*

Except the hilly regions in the north-east, south-east and some areas of high land in the northern part, the country consists of plain and fertile land. A network of rivers exists in the country of which the Padma, the Jamuna, the Teesta, the Brahmaputra, the Surma, the Meghna and the Karnaphuli are prominent. All those rivers have 230 tributaries with a total length of about 24140 kilometers. The alluvial soil is thus continuously being enriched by heavy silts deposited by rivers during the rainy season.

### *Flora and Fauna*

Of the total area of Bangladesh, forest lands account for almost 21.05% of its geographical surface. The total forest land includes classified and unclassified state lands and homestead forests and tea/rubber gardens. The Sundarban is the largest mangrove forest in the world. It lies at the southern part of the Ganges delta and is spread across the coastal areas of Bangladesh and West Bengal of India. The section of Sundarban that belongs to Bangladesh has been listed in the UNESCO world heritage. The Sundarban is known for its wide range of fauna. Sundarban is the home of the world famous 'Royal Bengal Tiger'. Numerous species of birds, spotted deer, crocodiles and snakes also inhabit there. The country produces timber, bamboo and cane. Bamboos grow in almost all areas but quality timber grows mostly in the hilly region of country. Among the timber sal, gamari, chaplish, telsu᳚, jarul, teak, garjan and sundari are valuably important. Plantation of rubber in the hilly regions of the country was undertaken and extraction of rubber had already been started.

*Climate*

Bangladesh enjoys generally a sub-tropical monsoon climate. While there are six seasons in a year, three namely, Winter, Summer and Monsoon are prominent. Winter which is quite pleasant begins in November and ends in February. In Winter there is not usually much fluctuation in temperature which ranges from minimum of 7<sup>o</sup>C—13<sup>o</sup>C (45<sup>o</sup>F—55<sup>o</sup>F) to maximum of 24<sup>o</sup>C—31<sup>o</sup>C (75<sup>o</sup>F—85<sup>o</sup>F). The maximum temperature recorded in Summer is 37<sup>o</sup>C (98<sup>o</sup>F) although in some places this occasionally rises up to 41<sup>o</sup>C (105<sup>o</sup>F) or more. Monsoon starts in July and stays up to October. This period accounts for 80% of the total rainfall. The average annual rainfall varies from 1429 to 4338 millimeters. The maximum rainfall is recorded in the coastal areas of Chattogram and northern part of Sylhet district, while the minimum is observed in the western and northern parts of the country.

*Population*

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics conducted the fifth decennial population census in the country on March 15-19, 2011. As per population census 2011 report the population (adjusted) of the country stood at 149.77 million in 2011. The male population was 74.98 million and female 74.79 million. The intercensal growth rate of population 2011 census was 1.37 per annum. The density of population was 843 per sq.km. in 2001 which increased to 976 per sq.km. in 2011. The sex ratio of the population is 100.25 males per 100 females. There were 32.1 million households in the country distributed over 56,348 mauzas (revenue villages).

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics introduces Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS) in 1980 to determine the annual population change during inter-censal period. As reported in the SVRS the population (estimated) of the country stood at 162.7 million in 1 July, 2017. The male population was 81.4 million and female 81.3 million. The intercensal growth rate of population 2017 SVRS was 1.37 per annum. The density of population was 1090 per sq.km. in 2016 which increased to 1103 per sq.km. in 2017. The sex ratio of the population is 100.2 males per 100 females.

*Labour Forces*

The total employed population (million) 15+ of the country has been estimated at 63.5 million as per Report of Labour Force Survey, 2016-17, of which 43.5 million are male and 20.0 million are female while it was 62.2 million for both sex, 43.1 million for male and 19.1 million for female in Labour Force Survey 2015-16 as per usual definition.

*Capital and other Cities average*

Dhaka, formerly Dacca, is the capital and the largest metropolitan city of the country. The city is within the monsoon climate zone, with an annual average temperature of 25<sup>o</sup>C (77<sup>o</sup>F) and monthly varying between 18<sup>o</sup>C (64<sup>o</sup>F) in January and 29<sup>o</sup>C (84<sup>o</sup>F) in August. Chattogram is the main sea port and second largest metropolitan city of Bangladesh and has extensively developed port facilities for ocean steamers.

Administrative Setup	<p>Bangladesh is governed by a Parliamentary Form of Government. The President is the head of the State while the Prime Minister is the head of the Government. According to the Constitutions, the Prime Minister is appointed by the President based upon the result of the electorate's choice in parliamentary general election. The Prime Minister is selected by the President. The Prime Minister is assisted by a council of ministers in discharging his/her duties. For the convenience of administration, the country is divided into eight administrative divisions; each is placed under a Divisional Commissioner. Each division is further sub-divided into zilas (Districts). After the administrative re-organization carried out in 1984, the country has been divided into 64 zilas. Each zila is headed by a Deputy Commissioner (DC) who is assisted by other officials. Each zila is further divided into a number of Upazilas (Sub district) headed by Upazila Nirbahi Officer(UNO).</p>
The legislature	<p>The constitution provides a Parliament for Bangladesh (to be known as the House of the Nation) in which legislative power of the Republic is vested. It consists of 300 members directly elected by adult franchise. The Members of House of the nation elect another 50 female members. Thus, the total number of members of the House is 350.</p>
The Judiciary	<p>The Supreme Court of Bangladesh is the highest judicial organ and comprises of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division. The Supreme Court of Bangladesh is headed by a Chief Justice. The Supreme Court serves as the guardian of the constitution and enforces the fundamental rights of the citizens. The Appellate Division hears and determines appeals from judgments, decrees, orders or sentences of the High Court Division. At the district level, the district court is headed by Sub judge who is assisted by Additional District Judge, subordinate judges, assistant judges and magistrates.</p>
Local Government	<p>The tiers of Local Government are (i) Union Parishad, (ii) Upazila Parishad, and (iii) Zila Parishad. However, in the urban areas, there are two types of Local Government System –namely (i) Pourashava (Municipality) and (ii) City Corporation. The Local Government bodies are constituted by the representatives directly elected by the people.</p>
Fundamental Foreign Policy of Bangladesh	<p>The fundamental Foreign Policy of Bangladesh is - The state shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlements of international disputes, and respect for international law on the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charters and on the basis of those principles shall –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Strive for the renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament,</li><li>(b) Uphold the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means of its own free choice, and</li></ul> <p>© Support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism.</p>

*Communication System*        The country has about 2835 kilometers of rail-way, 21269 kilometers of paved road and roughly 6000 kilometers of perennial and seasonal waterways. Side by side with development of road transport, efforts are under way to develop the water transport system. In fact, rivers are the life line of the nation, which provide the cheapest means of transport, water for agricultural operation and ensure supply of fish for people. Steps have been taken to put more mechanized boats into service and modernize the existing country boats.

Regarding air transport facilities, Dhaka is connected by air with London, Bangkok, Abudhabi, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Karachi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Dubai, Jeddah, Kathmandu, Yangon, Kuwait, Rome and Bahrain by her national airline (Biman). A number of foreign airlines operate their international services with a link to Dhaka. Regular air services are operated by the Biman between Dhaka and other major towns in the country. The two sea ports of Bangladesh are situated in Chattogram and Mongla. Payra sea port is the 3<sup>rd</sup> sea port of Bangladesh located on the bank of Rabnabad Channel under Kalapara, Patuakhali. Among the river ports and terminals, Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chandpur, Barishal, Khulna, Aricha, Paturia, Goalando, Jagannathganj ghat, Bhairab Bazar, Bahadurabad and Fulchari ghat are important.

The country has a network of radio and television broadcasting. There were two television stations in Dhaka and Chattogram under government and it increased to 17 stations. Presently 31 television channels are broadcasting under the government & private ownerships. The television system was introduced in 1965 and since then sub-stations have been set up in Sylhet, Khulna, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Natore, Noakhali, Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, Thakurgaon, Patuakhali, Brahmanbaria, Jhenaidah, Rajshahi etc. The Colour Television system was introduced on 1st December, 1980. An extensive telecommunication system has connected the capital city with other places within the country. Telecommunication lines have also been established with major cities of the world through the earth satellite ground stations at Betbunia in the Chattogram Hill-Tracts and Talibabad (Kaliakoir) in Gazipur Zila. In order to cater the high speed of data communication Bangladesh has already been linked with information superhighway through submarine cable in the Bay of Bengal.

*Education and  
Culture*

The education system of Bangladesh is divided into Three levels (i) Primary (from grades 1 to 8), Secondary (from grades 9 to 10), Higher Secondary (from grades 11 to 12) and Tertiary. Besides, there are some private institutions providing English medium education. They offer 'O' level and 'A' level courses. The highest allocation in the national budget for education exposes that Government of Bangladesh is very much keen for human resources development through education. Bangladesh has also Madrasa system of education which emphasizes on Arabic medium Islam-based education. This system is supervised by the Madrasa Board of the country.

Bangla is the mother tongue of Bangladesh. But to establish Bangla as the mother language, Bangalees had to sacrifice their lives. A number of People were martyred in February 21, 1952 to establish the rights of mother language. In recognition of their supreme sacrifice, UNESCO declared 21<sup>st</sup> February as the "International Mother Language Day" throughout the world.

Bangladesh has a rich historical and cultural past; combining Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, and Mongolian, Mughal, Arab, Persian, Turkish and West European cultures. Bangladesh has a unique cultural history, dating back more than 2500 years ago. The land, the rivers and the lives of the common people combined have formed a rich heritage. The culture of Bangladesh is composed of different forms, including music, dance and drama, art and craft, folklores and folktales, language and literature, philosophy and religion, festivals and celebrations etc. Festivals and celebrations are an integral part of the culture of Bangladesh. Pohela Baishakh (Bengali New Year), Independence Day, Victory Day National Mourning Day, Eid-ul-Fitre, Eid-ul-Azha, Muharram, Durga Puja, Shahid Dibash and International Mother Language Day, Buddha Purnima etc. are widely celebrated, across the country.

Bangladeshis are great enthusiasts of sports and games. Football, handball, basketball, volleyball, table tennis, hockey, badminton, cricket, kabadi, swimming, boat racing and lawn tennis are some of the most popular outdoor games in this country.

*Agriculture and  
Main Crops*

Bangladesh is mainly an agricultural country. Agriculture is the single largest producing sector of the economy and contributes about 13.82 % to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. This sector also accommodates around 40.6% (in 2016-17) of labour force. GDP growth rate of Bangladesh mainly depends on the performance of the agriculture sector. Due to natural calamities like flood cyclone, drought, loss of production in both food and cash crops are almost a regular phenomenon. Yet in recent years, there has been a substantial increase in food grain production. Agricultural holding in Bangladesh is generally small but use of modern machinery and equipment is gradually increasing. Rice, jute, sugarcane, potato, pulses, wheat, tea and tobacco are the principal crops of Bangladesh. Crop diversification programme, credit supply, extension work, research and input distribution policies pursued by the government are yielding positive results. The country is now on the threshold of attaining self-sufficiency in food grain production.

*Fish Wealth*

Bangladesh is rich in fish wealth. In the innumerable rivers, canals, tanks and other low lying and depressed areas and paddy fields that remain under water for about 6 months in a year and cover nearly 12 million acres, tropical fish of hundreds of varieties are cultivated. Rice and fish constitutes an average Bangladeshi's principal diet. Hilsa, lobsters and shrimps are some of the fish varieties that are exported to foreign countries. Having the Bay of Bengal in the south of the country enjoys geographic advantage for marine fishing.

*Mineral  
Resources  
and Energy*

Bangladesh has a few proven mineral resources. The country has enormous deposit of natural gas. So far, 17 gas fields have been discovered from which natural gas is available for power-generation, industrial and other uses. Fertilizer factories that are operating in the country including the petro-chemical complex at Ashuganj and also those yet to be commissioned in near future are and will be using sizeable quantity of natural gas.

Coal deposits have been found in Bangladesh and mining activity is going on with international assistance. Electricity is produced by both thermal and hydro-electric process. The total generation of electricity amounted to 55346 million kilowatt hours in 2016-17. The solitary hydro-electric project having installed capacity of producing 230 m.w.electricity is located at Kaptai in the Chattogram Hill Tracts. Limestone, the basic raw material for the production of cement, has been found in some places in the country and cement factories are being set up for their utilization. Other minerals found include hard rock, lignite, silica sand, white clay, etc. Salt is manufactured on a small scale at several thousand evaporation sites in the coastal areas of Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

Extensive radio-active sand deposits have been found all along the beaches from Kutubdia to Teknaf. A survey estimates the reserve to be of the order of 0.5 million tons of sand containing a significant amount of usable heavy minerals.

*Industries*

Although Bangladesh is predominantly an agricultural country. A large number of large-scale industries based on both indigenous and imported raw materials have been set up. Among them ready-made garments, cotton textile, pharmaceuticals, fertilizer, wood product, iron and steel, ceramic, cement and plastic product, chemical are important ones. Other notable industries are engineering and ship building, oil refinery, paints, colours and varnishes, electric cables and wires, electric lamps, fluorescent tube lights, other electrical goods and accessories, matches, cigarettes, etc.. Among the cottage industries, handlooms, carpet-making, shoe-making, coir, bamboo and cane products, earthenware, brass and bell metal products, bidi and cheroots, small tools and implements, ornaments, etc. are important.

The manufacturing sector contributes about 18% of the GDP. Growth rate of manufacturing sector is dominated by ready-made garments. Bangladesh is the fifth largest garment exporter to the European Union and among the top ten apparel suppliers to the US. In the past two decades, Bangladesh has emerged as a very successful manufacturer and exporter of ready-made garments.

*Finance,  
Banking  
and Insurance*

Bangladesh has a mixed banking system comprising nationalized, private and foreign commercial banks. Bangladesh Bank is the central bank of the country and is entrusted with the responsibilities of formulating monetary policies of the Government and controls all commercial banks. The Grameen Bank is a core microfinance organization and also community development bank in Bangladesh providing small loans (known as microcredit) to impoverished people without requiring collateral. The system is based on the idea that the poor have skills that are under-utilized but do not have the capacity to take loan from conventional banks by providing collateral. The bank also accepts deposits, provides other services, and runs several development-oriented businesses including fabric, telephone and energy companies.

In recent years, the banking system has been greatly changed. In light of the avowed Government policy of encouraging the private sector to play its due role in economic development of the country. The Government has allowed setting up of commercial and investment banks in the private sector. In response to this encouraging Government policy quite a number of commercial and investment banks including some Islamic banks have been set up in the private sector and have started functioning.

There are other specialized financial institutions namely, House Building Finance Corporation, Bangladesh Krishi (Agriculture) Bank, Bangladesh Shilpa (Industrial) Bank, Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (Industrial credit organization) and Co-operative Banks which are operating in their respective fields to facilitate these sectors by providing credit and other services at convenient terms. Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of Bangladesh has also been set up by the Government to provide equity support to public limited companies in the private sector.

In the field of insurance the Government has allowed both public and private sectors to operate life as well as non-life insurance business in order to develop a strong competition. In the public sector, there are one Jiban Bima Corporation and Postal Life Insurance for the life insurance business and one Shadharan Bima Corporation for general insurance business. In the private sector more than sixty one (61) companies are engaged in life and general insurance business.

*Tourists  
attractions*

Bangladesh is a large delta laden with bounties of nature. The borderland along the north-east, east and the south-east is evergreen forested hills with wondrous wildlife. All her six seasons vibrate with fairs and festivals, mirth and merriment.

Though Bangladesh is one of the world's smallest countries, it has the world's longest unbroken sandy sea-beach along the Bay of Bengal at Cox's Bazar, The Sundarbans, (the largest mangrove forest), the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger and the spotted deer, it is recognized as the part of world heritage by UNESCO for being the diffuse home of flora and fauna. Dhaka - the capital known as the city of mosques, Rangamati - the heart of the panoramic lake district, Sylhet-land of holy shrines of great religious saints and of fascinating hills and tea gardens, Chattogram - the largest port city and the Commercial Capital of the country known as the city of holy shrines, Mainamati, Mohasthangarh and Paharpur archaeological treasures in the country over the period from 300 BC to 1200 AD. Saint Martin's, a beautiful coral island about 10 km south-west of the southern tip of the mainland is a topical slime, with beaches fringed with coconut plants and beautiful marine life are one of the most attractions in the country. Except these, Kuakata's long and wide unique beach and Foy's lake, a man-made lake in Patuakhali sets amidst picturesque surroundings is the natural form. Above all riverine beauty, colourful tribal life and simple village life of the friendly millions are the main motivational factors for potential visitors.

Bangladesh has a variety of attractions for visitors, tourists and holidaymakers including archaeological sites, historical mosques and monuments, resorts, beaches, anthropological communities, forests, flora and fauna.

The Government of Bangladesh recognized tourism as an industry and declared a National Tourism Policy for the development of domestic and international tourism in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, National Tourism Organization is playing the leading role as promoter of the industry.



*Bangladesh  
Vision-2021*

Vision 2021 is a perspective plan to build Bangladesh a middle income and technology based country by 2021. The main perspective plans are:

2010: 100 percent net student enrolment at primary level.

2011: Supply of pure drinking water for the entire population.

2012: Self-Sufficiency in food.

2013: Each house brought under hygienic sanitation.

2013: Attain 8 percent annual growth rate and this will be increased to 10 percent in 2017 and sustained.

2013: Bangladesh generates 7000 Megawatt of electricity which will be further increased to 8000 Megawatt in 2015. Steps will be taken to increase power generation capacity assuming that the demand for power will reach the level of 20,000 Megawatt in 2021.

2013: Free tuition up to degree level.

2014: Bangladesh attains full literacy.

2015: Living accommodation for the entire population.

2021: Contribution of agriculture, industry and service sector to GDP will stand at 15,40 and 45 percent respectively in place of 22,28 and 50 percent as at present.

2021: Unemployment reduced to 15 percent from the present rate of 40 percent.

2021: Labour in agriculture comes down to 30% from 48% at present.

2021: Labour in industry is 25% from 16% and in service 45% from 36% at present.

2021: Poverty rate comes down to 15% from 45% at present

2021: Bangladesh knows as a country of educated people with skills in information technology.

2021: 85% of the population have standard nutritional food.

2021: Poor people ensured a minimum of 2122 kilo calories of food.

2021: All kinds of contagious diseases eliminated.

2021: Longevity increases to 70 years.

2021: Infant mortality comes down to 15 from 54 per thousand at present.

2021: Maternal death rate reduced to 1.5% from 3.8%.

2021: Use of birth control methods increased to 80%

*Empowerment of  
Women*

The term empowerment is a process through which women in general gain control over resources and decision making.

The present situation of the women in our country is unfortunate, The women especially who live in the rural areas passing inhuman life. Rights and liberty is the dream to them, Number of women is not enough in our administration and Very few women are involved in Politics. The political status of our women is not satisfactory. Participation of women in our economic activities is also very poor. Wage differentials between men and women are very high in case of wage employment.

The factors behind the disempowerment of women are:

A. Economic factors

- I) Dependency on men
- II) Ownership of land
- III) Less scope for employment

B. Socio-cultural and religious factors

- I) Illiteracy
- II) Socially ignored
- III) Cultural apathy
- IV) Purdah or Seclusion.

C. Political factors

- I) Indifference of political parties
- II) Limited participation in electoral politics
- III) Intra-household discrimination.

*Educational  
Policy*

With a view to implementing the election manifesto 2008, Vision 2021 and digital Bangladesh. ; The government has adopted consistent with what has been provided for in the constitution and it will work as a strategy to develop the country as secular and citizen friendly environment where well planned education system will operate to ensure social welfare.

The policy aims at stimulating intellectual ability and instilling work culture and social skills as well as establishing moral, human, cultural, scientific and social values at personal and national levels.

The major characteristic of the education policy 2010 is that it proposes primary education up to grade VIII and Secondary education up to grade XII. The implementation period of the education policy is assumed a total additional cost of TK.68, 000 core has been estimated for the venture.

*Energy Policy*

The government has been preparing power system master plan 2021 to realize the goal to provide the electricity for all.

According to the initial finding of power system master plan, 2010 study, the maximum demand including captive power in 2015, 2021 and 2030 would be about 12000, 20000 and 36000 respectively.

The meet the demand with reasonable reliability, instable capacity will be increased to 23000 mw and 37000 mw by the year 2021 and 2030 respectively.

To fulfill the growing demand of electricity, various short, medium and long term generations, distribution and transmission project are in implementation.

According to the existing generation expansion programme, a total of 11,456 mw of new generation will be added to the national grid by the end of 2015.

The industrial policy 2010 of Bangladesh proposed an integrated strategy of economic growth through rapid industrialization. It has been prepared taking into consideration the government's determination to achieve millennium development goals by 2015, and halve the number of the unemployed, and hunger and poverty stricken people by 2017. To alleviate poverty by creating additional employment opportunities, the policy aims to create job for one person per family.

*Industrial Policy*

The industrial policy envisages rapid industrialization through short, medium and long term measures for raising the rate of GDP growth to 10.22 % by 2016-17, and 12.06 % by 2017-18. It emphasizes an increase in the industry sector's share in GDP to 40% by 2021.

The industrial policy 2010, recommends for establishing economic zones, Industrial parks, high tech parks and private Export Processing Zone for rapid and balanced industrial development of the country.

The policy recommends that the public sector's industries will be complementary and competitive to private sector's industries. Besides, public-private partnership will be an important element of the industrial policy.