

National Symbols of Bangladesh

A Comprehensive Guide to the Republic of Bangladesh

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1. Introduction

Bangladesh, officially known as the People's Republic of Bangladesh, is a nation rich in cultural heritage and natural beauty. The country's national symbols represent the spirit, history, and identity of the Bengali people. These symbols embody the struggle for independence, the natural wealth of the land, and the cultural values that define the nation.

Quick Facts about Bangladesh:

- **Independence:** March 26, 1971
- **Victory Day:** December 16, 1971

- **Capital:** Dhaka
 - **Population:** ~170 million (2025)
 - **Area:** 147,570 km²
 - **Official Language:** Bengali (Bangla)
 - **Government:** Parliamentary Republic
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2. National Flag

2.1 Description

The national flag of Bangladesh consists of a dark green rectangular field with a red circle positioned slightly toward the hoist side of center.

Specifications:

- **Proportions:** 10:6 (length to width)
- **Green Field:** Pantone 342C
- **Red Circle:** Pantone 18-1664 TPX
- **Circle Position:** Center-left (1/20 of flag width from geometric center)
- **Circle Diameter:** 1/5 of flag width

2.2 Symbolism

- **Green Color:** Represents the lush green landscape of Bangladesh, youth, vigor, and fertility
- **Red Circle:** Symbolizes the rising sun over Bengal, the blood shed during the liberation war, and the sacrifice of freedom fighters

2.3 History

- **Designed by:** Quamrul Hassan (preliminary design by students)
- **First Hoisted:** March 2, 1971 (at Dhaka University)
- **Official Adoption:** January 17, 1972
- **Original Design:** Included a map of Bangladesh in golden yellow within the red circle
- **Current Design:** Map removed on January 17, 1972, for simplification

2.4 Flag Protocol

- **Display Hours:** Sunrise to sunset on government buildings
- **Half-mast Days:** National mourning days, death of national leaders

- **Flag Code:** Regulated by the Flag Rules of Bangladesh
 - **Prohibited Uses:** Commercial advertising, clothing (except uniform badges)
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3. National Emblem

3.1 Description

The national emblem of Bangladesh features a water lily (Shapla) floating on water, flanked by rice sheaves on either side, with four stars and a crescent above, and a jute plant on each side.

3.2 Elements and Symbolism

Central Element:

- **Water Lily (Shapla):** National flower, represents beauty and purity

Supporting Elements:

- **Rice Sheaves:** Two sheaves representing the main crop and food security
- **Jute Plants:** Golden fiber, once called "golden fiber of Bengal"
- **Four Stars:** Represent the four fundamental principles of state policy
- **Crescent:** Islamic heritage and faith of the majority population
- **Water:** Rivers and water resources of Bangladesh

3.3 State Principles (Four Stars)

1. **Nationalism:** Bengali nationalism and cultural identity
2. **Secularism:** Religious harmony and equality
3. **Democracy:** Democratic governance and people's participation
4. **Socialism:** Economic justice and equality

3.4 Official Use

- Government documents and seals
 - Currency notes and coins
 - Official letterheads
 - Diplomatic missions
 - Military insignia
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4. National Anthem

4.1 "Amar Shonar Bangla" (My Golden Bengal)

Composer: Rabindranath Tagore **Year Written:** 1905 **Adopted as National Anthem:** 1971 **Duration:** Approximately 52 seconds (first 10 lines) **Musical Form:** Dadra tala in Raga Alhaiya Bilawal

4.2 Original Bengali Lyrics (First Stanza)

আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালোবাসি।
চিরদিন তোমার আকাশ, তোমার বাতাস, আমার প্রাণে বাজায় বাঁশি।
ও মা, ফাগুনে তোর আমের বনে ঘ্রাণে পাগল করে,
মরি হয়, হয় রে—
ও মা, অঘ্রানে তোর ভরা ক্ষেতে আমি কী দেখেছি মধুর হাসি।

4.3 English Translation

My golden Bengal, I love you.
Forever your skies, your air, play the flute in my heart.
O mother, in spring, the fragrance from your mango groves
makes me wild with joy—
Ah, what a thrill!
O mother, in autumn, what sweet smiles I have seen
in your fields full of rice.

4.4 Historical Context

- Originally written as a protest song against the partition of Bengal (1905)
- Inspired the independence movement
- Chosen by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the national anthem
- Represents the deep love for the motherland

5. National Flower - Water Lily (Shapla)

5.1 Scientific Information

- Scientific Name:** *Nymphaea nouchali*
- Bengali Name:** Shapla (শাপলা)
- Family:** Nymphaeaceae
- Type:** Aquatic flowering plant

5.2 Characteristics

- **Colors:** White, pink, purple, blue
- **Habitat:** Ponds, lakes, slow-moving rivers
- **Blooming Season:** Year-round in Bangladesh
- **Flower Size:** 5-15 cm diameter
- **Leaves:** Large, round, floating on water surface

5.3 Cultural Significance

- Symbol of purity and beauty in Bengali culture
- Featured in Bengali literature and poetry
- Used in traditional festivals and decorations
- Represents the serene beauty of Bangladesh's water bodies

5.4 Economic and Social Value

- **Food:** Stems and rhizomes are edible
 - **Medicine:** Traditional Ayurvedic uses
 - **Decoration:** Used in religious ceremonies
 - **Tourism:** Attracts visitors to water gardens
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6. National Bird - Oriental Magpie-Robin (Doyel)

6.1 Scientific Information

- **Scientific Name:** *Copsychus saularis*
- **Bengali Name:** Doyel (দোয়েল)
- **Family:** Muscicapidae
- **Length:** 19-20 cm
- **Weight:** 20-30 grams

6.2 Physical Description

- **Male:** Black head, back, and breast; white belly and wing patches
- **Female:** Grayish-black instead of black; similar pattern
- **Bill:** Black, straight, pointed
- **Legs:** Black, long and slender
- **Tail:** Long, often held upright

6.3 Behavior and Habitat

- **Song:** Melodious, varied calls; excellent mimic
- **Habitat:** Gardens, parks, agricultural areas, forest edges
- **Diet:** Insects, worms, small fruits
- **Nesting:** Cup-shaped nests in trees or bushes
- **Migration:** Resident species, non-migratory

6.4 Cultural Importance

- Featured in Bengali folk songs and literature
 - Symbol of melodious voice and beauty
 - Kept as cage birds (though discouraged for conservation)
 - Represents the musical heritage of Bengal
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7. National Animal - Royal Bengal Tiger

7.1 Scientific Information

- **Scientific Name:** *Panthera tigris tigris*
- **Bengali Name:** Bagh (বাঘ)
- **Subspecies:** Bengal tiger
- **Conservation Status:** Endangered

7.2 Physical Characteristics

- **Length:** 2.7-3.1 meters (males), 2.4-2.65 meters (females)
- **Weight:** 180-258 kg (males), 100-160 kg (females)
- **Coat:** Orange with black stripes; white belly
- **Unique Feature:** Each tiger has unique stripe pattern

7.3 Habitat in Bangladesh

- **Primary Location:** Sundarbans mangrove forest
- **Population:** Approximately 100-120 tigers (2019 census)
- **Territory:** Largest mangrove forest in the world
- **Adaptation:** Excellent swimmers, hunt in water

7.4 Conservation Efforts

- **Protected Areas:** Sundarbans National Park
- **International Programs:** Project Tiger, WWF initiatives
- **Government Measures:** Wildlife protection laws
- **Community Involvement:** Local conservation programs

7.5 Cultural Significance

- Symbol of strength, courage, and national pride
 - Featured in folklore and mythology
 - Represents the wild beauty of Bangladesh
 - Tourism attraction for eco-tourism
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8. National Fruit - Jackfruit (Kathal)

8.1 Scientific Information

- **Scientific Name:** Artocarpus heterophyllus
- **Bengali Name:** Kathal (কাঁঠাল)
- **Family:** Moraceae
- **Type:** Tropical evergreen tree fruit

8.2 Physical Characteristics

- **Size:** 30-80 cm long, 25-50 cm diameter
- **Weight:** 4.5-35 kg (largest tree fruit)
- **Exterior:** Green, spiky skin when unripe; yellow when ripe
- **Interior:** Yellow flesh pods with large seeds
- **Taste:** Sweet, aromatic when ripe

8.3 Nutritional Value

- **Vitamins:** Rich in Vitamin C, A, B6
- **Minerals:** Potassium, calcium, iron
- **Carbohydrates:** Natural sugars and fiber
- **Protein:** Present in seeds
- **Calories:** ~95 per 100g of flesh

8.4 Cultural and Economic Importance

- **Cuisine:** Ripe fruit eaten fresh; unripe used in curries
- **Traditional Medicine:** Various parts used in Ayurveda
- **Economy:** Export potential, domestic consumption
- **Festivals:** Used in traditional celebrations
- **Literature:** Mentioned in Bengali poetry and stories

8.5 Cultivation

- **Climate:** Tropical, humid conditions
 - **Regions:** Grown throughout Bangladesh
 - **Season:** Mainly April to August
 - **Varieties:** Multiple local varieties with different characteristics
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9. National Tree - Mango Tree (Aam Gach)

9.1 Scientific Information

- **Scientific Name:** *Mangifera indica*
- **Bengali Name:** Aam Gach (আম গাছ)
- **Family:** Anacardiaceae
- **Type:** Tropical evergreen tree

9.2 Characteristics

- **Height:** 10-40 meters
- **Lifespan:** 100-300+ years
- **Leaves:** Dark green, leathery, 15-35 cm long
- **Flowers:** Small, white/pink, fragrant panicles
- **Fruit Season:** May to August in Bangladesh

9.3 Cultural Significance

- **Literature:** Extensively featured in Bengali poetry
- **Festivals:** Mango festivals during summer
- **Traditions:** Associated with Bengali New Year (Pohela Boishakh)
- **Symbol:** Represents prosperity and abundance

- **Rural Life:** Central to village life and economy

9.4 Varieties in Bangladesh

- **Langra:** Popular early variety
- **Himsagar:** Sweet, aromatic
- **Khirsapat:** Medium-sized, sweet
- **Ashwina:** Late variety
- **Fazli:** Large-sized mango
- **Gopalbhog:** Small, very sweet

9.5 Economic Importance

- **Export:** Growing international market
 - **Processing:** Juice, pulp, dried products
 - **Employment:** Supports rural livelihoods
 - **Wood:** Valuable timber for furniture
 - **Medicinal:** Various parts used in traditional medicine
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10. National Fish - Hilsa (Ilish)

10.1 Scientific Information

- **Scientific Name:** *Tenualosa ilisha*
- **Bengali Name:** Ilish (ইলিশ)
- **Family:** Clupeidae (Herring family)
- **Type:** Anadromous fish (lives in sea, breeds in rivers)

10.2 Physical Characteristics

- **Length:** 16-60 cm (average 35-45 cm)
- **Weight:** 200-3000 grams
- **Body:** Elongated, laterally compressed
- **Color:** Silver with greenish-blue back
- **Scales:** Small, silvery scales

10.3 Habitat and Distribution

- **Primary Waters:** Bay of Bengal, Padma, Meghna, Jamuna rivers
- **Migration:** Sea to rivers for breeding (July-October)
- **Spawning:** Fresh water rivers
- **Global Distribution:** Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf

10.4 Cultural and Culinary Importance

- **Cuisine:** Most popular fish in Bengali cuisine
- **Festivals:** Central to Bengali celebrations
- **Literature:** Featured in poems, songs, stories
- **Economic Value:** Major fisheries industry
- **Social Status:** Symbol of prosperity

10.5 Popular Preparations

- **Ilish Bhapa:** Steamed hilsa with mustard
- **Ilish Macher Jhol:** Hilsa curry
- **Bhaja Ilish:** Fried hilsa
- **Shorshe Ilish:** Hilsa in mustard sauce
- **Ilish Polao:** Hilsa with aromatic rice

10.6 Conservation Concerns

- **Overfishing:** Declining populations
 - **River Dams:** Blocking migration routes
 - **Pollution:** Water contamination affecting breeding
 - **Government Measures:** Fishing bans during breeding season
 - **Research:** Artificial breeding programs
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11. National Mosque - Baitul Mukarram

11.1 Overview

- **Name:** Baitul Mukarram National Mosque
- **Location:** Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Completed:** 1968
- **Architect:** T. Abdul Hussain Thariani

- **Capacity:** 30,000 worshippers

11.2 Architectural Features

- **Style:** Modern Islamic architecture
- **Design:** Cube-shaped, inspired by Kaaba
- **Materials:** Concrete and marble
- **Minarets:** Four corner minarets
- **Dome:** Central dome with geometric patterns

11.3 Facilities

- **Main Prayer Hall:** Multi-story prayer space
- **Islamic Foundation:** Administrative offices
- **Library:** Islamic literature and research
- **Conference Hall:** Religious gatherings
- **Shopping Complex:** Islamic books and artifacts

11.4 Religious Significance

- **Status:** Most important mosque in Bangladesh
 - **Prayers:** Five daily prayers, Friday congregations
 - **Festivals:** Major Islamic celebrations
 - **Religious Education:** Islamic learning center
 - **National Events:** State religious ceremonies
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12. National Language - Bengali (Bangla)

12.1 Language Information

- **Name:** Bengali/Bangla (বাংলা)
- **Family:** Indo-European, Indo-Aryan
- **Script:** Bengali script (Bangla lipi)
- **Speakers:** 230+ million worldwide
- **Status:** 7th most spoken language globally

12.2 Historical Significance

- **Language Movement:** February 21, 1952

- **Martyrs:** Students died for language rights
- **Recognition:** UNESCO International Mother Language Day
- **Independence:** Language played key role in 1971 liberation
- **Cultural Identity:** Fundamental to Bengali nationalism

12.3 Literary Heritage

- **Medieval Period:** Chandidas, Vidyapati
- **Modern Literature:** Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam
- **Nobel Prize:** Rabindranath Tagore (1913)
- **Rich Tradition:** Poetry, novels, drama, essays
- **Folk Literature:** Extensive oral tradition

12.4 Contemporary Status

- **Official Language:** Bangladesh and West Bengal (India)
 - **Education:** Medium of instruction
 - **Media:** Newspapers, television, radio
 - **Internet:** Growing digital presence
 - **Diaspora:** Spoken by Bengali communities worldwide
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13. National Currency - Bangladeshi Taka

13.1 Basic Information

- **Name:** Bangladeshi Taka (টাকা)
- **Symbol:** ₳
- **ISO Code:** BDT
- **Subdivisions:** 100 poisha
- **Issuing Authority:** Bangladesh Bank

13.2 History

- **Introduction:** 1972 (replacing Pakistani rupee)
- **Exchange Rate:** Initially 7.5 taka = 1 USD
- **Devaluation:** Multiple adjustments over decades
- **Current Rate:** ~110 taka = 1 USD (2025)

13.3 Currency Notes

Current Series (2011-2022):

- **2 Taka:** (coin only)
- **5 Taka:** Green, Shaheed Minar
- **10 Taka:** Purple, Curzon Hall
- **20 Taka:** Orange, Lalbagh Fort
- **50 Taka:** Magenta, Kantanagar Temple
- **100 Taka:** Red, Star Mosque
- **200 Taka:** Brown, Sixty Dome Mosque
- **500 Taka:** Blue, National Parliament Building
- **1000 Taka:** Multicolor, Father of the Nation

13.4 Security Features

- **Watermarks:** Various historical figures
 - **Security Thread:** Embedded security strips
 - **Microprinting:** Tiny text elements
 - **Intaglio Printing:** Raised text and images
 - **Fluorescent Inks:** UV-reactive elements
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14. National Sports

14.1 Kabaddi - Traditional National Sport

- **Status:** Traditional national sport
- **Origin:** Ancient South Asian game
- **Popularity:** Rural and urban areas
- **International:** Asian Games participation
- **Governing Body:** Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation

14.2 Cricket - Most Popular Sport

- **Status:** De facto national sport
- **Governing Body:** Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)
- **International Status:** Full ICC member since 2000

- **Major Achievements:** Asia Cup winners, World Cup participants
- **Popular Players:** Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiquur Rahim, Tamim Iqbal

14.3 Football (Soccer)

- **Popularity:** Second most popular sport
 - **Governing Body:** Bangladesh Football Federation
 - **Domestic League:** Bangladesh Premier League
 - **National Team:** Participates in regional competitions
 - **Development:** Growing youth participation
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15. Cultural Symbols

15.1 Traditional Dress

For Men:

- **Panjabi:** Traditional long shirt
- **Lungi:** Traditional wrap-around garment
- **Dhoti:** Traditional cloth garment
- **Pajama:** Loose trousers

For Women:

- **Saree:** Traditional wrapped garment
- **Salwar Kameez:** Tunic with loose pants
- **Sharee:** Six-yard cloth draped elegantly
- **Modern Fusion:** Contemporary adaptations

15.2 Traditional Music

- **Classical:** Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Geeti
- **Folk:** Baul, Bhatiyali, Bhawaiya
- **Instruments:** Tabla, Harmonium, Ektara, Dotara
- **Modern:** Adhunik Gaan, Band music

15.3 Traditional Dance

- **Classical:** Bharatanatyam, Kathak

- **Folk:** Bihu, Jatra dance
- **Regional:** Various district-specific dances
- **Modern:** Contemporary fusion styles

15.4 Festivals

- **Religious:** Eid, Durga Puja, Buddha Purnima, Christmas
 - **Cultural:** Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year)
 - **National:** Independence Day, Victory Day, Language Day
 - **Seasonal:** Nabanna (harvest festival)
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16. Historical Significance

16.1 Ancient Period

- **Prehistoric:** Evidence of human settlement 20,000+ years ago
- **Kingdoms:** Pala, Sena dynasties
- **Buddhism:** Major Buddhist center
- **Hinduism:** Temple architecture and culture

16.2 Medieval Period

- **Islamic Rule:** Sultanate period (1204-1576)
- **Mughal Era:** Part of Mughal Empire (1576-1757)
- **Architecture:** Mosques, tombs, forts
- **Literature:** Persian and Bengali literature flourished

16.3 Colonial Period

- **British Rule:** East India Company (1757-1947)
- **Partition:** Bengal divided (1905, 1947)
- **Independence Movement:** Role in Indian independence
- **Pakistan Period:** East Pakistan (1947-1971)

16.4 Liberation War

- **Declaration:** March 26, 1971
- **Duration:** 9 months of armed struggle
- **Leadership:** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tajuddin Ahmad

- **Victory:** December 16, 1971
 - **Recognition:** International recognition as independent nation
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17. Conclusion

The national symbols of Bangladesh represent the rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and the indomitable spirit of the Bengali people. From the blood-red sun on the green flag to the melodious call of the Doyel bird, each symbol tells a story of struggle, triumph, and identity.

Key Takeaways:

1. **Natural Heritage:** The symbols reflect Bangladesh's rich biodiversity and natural resources
2. **Cultural Identity:** Each symbol is deeply rooted in Bengali culture and tradition
3. **Historical Significance:** Many symbols played important roles in the independence movement
4. **Unity in Diversity:** Symbols represent religious harmony and cultural plurality
5. **National Pride:** These symbols instill patriotism and national consciousness

Preservation Responsibility:

As citizens of Bangladesh, it is our collective responsibility to:

- Preserve and protect our national symbols
- Educate future generations about their significance
- Promote conservation of endangered species like the Royal Bengal Tiger
- Maintain the purity of our language and literature
- Respect and honor our cultural heritage

The national symbols of Bangladesh are not merely emblems; they are living representations of our identity, values, and aspirations. They remind us of our glorious past, inspire us in the present, and guide us toward a prosperous future.

Through understanding and appreciating these symbols, we strengthen our connection to our motherland and ensure that the spirit of Bangladesh continues to flourish for generations to come.

Appendices

Appendix A: National Symbols Quick Reference

Symbol	Bengali Name	Scientific/Official Name	Significance
Flag	জাতীয় পতাকা	Green field with red circle	Independence & sacrifice
Emblem	জাতীয় প্রতীক	Water lily with rice sheaves	State principles
Anthem	জাতীয় সঙ্গীত	Amar Shonar Bangla	Love for motherland
Flower	শাপলা	Nymphaea nouchali	Purity & beauty
Bird	দোয়েল	Copsychus saularis	Melodious heritage
Animal	বাঘ	Panthera tigris tigris	Strength & courage
Fruit	কাঁঠাল	Artocarpus heterophyllus	Abundance
Tree	আম গাছ	Mangifera indica	Prosperity
Fish	ইলিশ	Tenualosa ilisha	Cultural tradition
Language	বাংলা	Bengali/Bangla	Identity & heritage

Appendix B: Important Dates

- February 21: International Mother Language Day
- March 26: Independence Day
- April 14: Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year)
- December 16: Victory Day
- August 15: National Mourning Day

Appendix C: Conservation Status

Symbol	Conservation Status	Threats	Protection Measures
Royal Bengal Tiger	Endangered	Habitat loss, poaching	Sundarbans protection
Hilsa Fish	Vulnerable	Overfishing, pollution	Fishing regulations
Water Lily	Least Concern	Habitat destruction	Wetland conservation
Mango Tree	Stable	Urbanization	Plantation programs
Oriental Magpie-Robin	Stable	Habitat loss	Urban green spaces

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- **Purpose:** Educational and reference material

This comprehensive document serves as an authoritative guide to understanding the national symbols of Bangladesh, their historical context, cultural significance, and contemporary relevance.