

## Timeline

Pre-1,500 BCE	Cultivation of irrigated rice and domestication of animals. Fossilwood industries.
Fifth century BCE	Urban centres, long-distance maritime trade, first sizeable states. Indo-European languages and Sanskritic culture begin to spread from the west. Regions and peoples of Bengal identified as Rarh, Pundra, Varendri, Gaur, Vanga, Samatata and Harikela.
Third century BCE	Mahasthan Brahmi inscription.
c. 640 CE	Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang ('Hiuen Tsiang') describes eastern Bengal.
Eighth–twelfth centuries	First Muslim influence in coastal areas.
Ninth century	Construction of Paharpur in north-western Bangladesh.
Tenth century	Bengali language develops; earliest surviving poems known as <i>Charyapada</i> .
Twelfth century	Lakhnauti-Gaur is capital of Sena state.
Thirteenth century	Islam reaches Bengal delta via the land route. Muhammad Bakhtiyar establishes a Muslim-ruled state, the first of many dominated by non-Bengalis, including Turks, North Indians, Afghans, Arakanese and Ethiopians.
1346	Ibn Battutah visits Shah Jalal in Sylhet.
Sixteenth century	Rice from the Bengal delta exported to many destinations, from the Moluccas in eastern Indonesia to the Maldives and to Goa in western India.

	Large textile industry, cotton and silk exports.
1520s	First Europeans (Portuguese) settle in the Bengal delta.
1580s	Portuguese open the first European trading post in Dhaka (Dutch follow in 1650s, English in 1660s, French in 1680s).
Sixteenth–seventeenth centuries	Rise of Islam as a popular religion in the Bengal delta.
1610	Mughal empire captures Dhaka, now renamed Jahangirnagar. It becomes the capital of Bengal.
1612	Mughal rule over much of the Bengal delta.
1650s	Bengali translator-poet Alaol active at the Arakan court.
1666	Portuguese and Arakanese relinquish Chittagong to the Mughals.
1690	Calcutta (today Kolkata) established by British.
c. 1713	Bengal becomes an independent polity under Murshid Quli Khan. The capital is moved to Murshidabad.
1757	Battle of Polashi (Plassey); after further clashes, notably the battle at Buxar in 1764, the British East India Company establishes itself as <i>de facto</i> ruler of Bengal.
1757–1911	Kolkata (Calcutta) is the capital of Bengal and British India.
1760s–90s	Fakir–Sannyasi resistance.
1769–70	Great Famine, which may have carried off one third of Bengal's population.
1774	Birth of mystic Baul poet Lalon Shah (Lalon Fakir).
1790	New system of land taxation ('permanent settlement') introduced. Codified in 1793, it will persist till the 1950s.

1782–7	Earthquake and floods force the Brahmaputra river into a new channel and lead to food scarcities.
1830s	English replaces Persian as the state language.
1830s–60s	Rural revolts inspired by Islamic ‘purification’ movements.
1840	Dhaka’s population reaches its lowest point, 50,000.
1850s	Railways spread through Bengal.
1857	Revolt (‘the Mutiny’) has little impact on the Bengal delta.
1858	East India Company abolished and British crown assumes direct control.
1860	British annex last the part of Bengal, the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
1897	Earthquake with a magnitude of 8.7 hits Bengal and Assam.
c. 1900	Water hyacinth begins to spread in Bengal’s waterways.
1901	Territory of future Bangladesh has 30 million inhabitants.
1905–11	Separate province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Dhaka is its capital. Swadeshi movement. Muslim and Hindu become political categories.
1905	Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain writes <i>Sultana’s Dream</i> .
1906	All-India Muslim League founded in Dhaka.
1910	Varendra Research Museum established in Rajshahi.
1921	University of Dhaka established.
1940	Muslim League adopts Pakistan (or Lahore) resolution: demand for independent states for Indian Muslims.
1943–4	Great Bengal Famine causes about 3.5 million deaths.
1946	Muslim–Hindu riots in Noakhali, Kolkata and Bihar.

1946	Elections return the Muslim League as the largest party.
1946–7	Tebhaga movement.
1947	14 August: British rule ends and British India is partitioned. The Bengal delta becomes part of the new state of Pakistan under the name 'East Bengal'. Dhaka is the provincial capital.
1947–8	About 800,000 migrants arrive in East Pakistan from India; about 1,000,000 migrants leave East Pakistan for India. Cross-border migration will continue for years.
1948–56	(Bengali) language movement in protest against imposition of Urdu as official language of Pakistan.
1949	Awami Muslim League (renamed Awami League in 1955) founded by Maulana Bhashani.
1950	East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act eliminates the superior rights that zamindars (landlords/tax-collectors) had enjoyed under the permanent settlement.
1950	Muslim–Hindu riots in East Pakistan and West Bengal (India).
1951	Territory of future Bangladesh has 44 million inhabitants.
1952	21 February ( <i>Ekushe</i> ): killing of 'language martyrs'; first Shohid Minar (Martyrs' Memorial) erected.
1952	Passport and visa system introduced.
1953	V-AID community development programme.
1954	Provincial elections in East Pakistan. Muslim League defeated. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman becomes junior cabinet member.

- 1954–62 Four new universities established in Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Chittagong and Dhaka.
- 1955 Adamjee Jute Mill goes into production in Narayanganj.
- 1955 Pakistan Academy for Rural Development established in Comilla.
- 1955 First direct passenger air connections between East and West Pakistan.
- 1955 Bangla Academy and Bulbul Academy for Fine Arts established in Dhaka.
- 1955 The first commercially useful gas field discovered in Haripur (Sylhet).
- 1956 'East Bengal' renamed 'East Pakistan'.
- 1957 Maulana Bhashani and others establish the National Awami Party (NAP).
- 1958 Army coup. Military regime in Pakistan headed by Ayub Khan (1958–69).
- 1960 World Bank's Aid-to-Pakistan consortium.
- 1961 Kaptai hydroelectric project completed. Lake Kaptai forms in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, forcing the 'Great Exodus' of displaced people.
- 1963 Chhayanot celebrates Bengali New Year publicly for the first time.
- 1965 India–Pakistan War. Train connections with India not resumed afterwards.
- 1966 Awami League launches Six-Point Programme.
- 1968–9 Popular uprising against Ayub Khan. The military replace him with Yahya Khan (1969–71).
- 1970 Cyclone kills 350,000–500,000 people in the Bengal delta.
- 1970 First national general elections in Pakistan. Awami League wins majority.
- 1971 25 March: beginning of Bangladesh Liberation War.

1971	16 December: end of war. East Pakistan becomes independent state of Bangladesh.
1972	Sheikh Mujibur Rahman heads Awami League government.
1972	Bangladesh declares itself a people's republic and introduces a constitution asserting that 'nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism' are its guiding principles.
1972	First issue of weekly <i>Bichitra</i> (1972–97).
1972	Establishment of the JSS (United People's Party) and Shanti Bahini in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
1973	Bangladesh's first general elections. Constitution and parliamentary system.
1974	Bangladesh has 71 million inhabitants.
1974	Famine causes excess mortality of some 1.5 million.
1975	January: constitutional coup and autocratic rule by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
1975	August: army coup. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and family killed in Dhaka.
1975	November: two more army coups. Military regime headed by Ziaur Rahman (1975–81).
1975–97	Chittagong Hill Tracts war.
1975	National Museum opened.
c. 1975–90	Green Revolution technology begins to push up agricultural yields.
1976	Death of Maulana Bhashani (c. 1880–1976).
1978	Leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami allowed to return from exile in Pakistan and resume political activities.
1980s	Ready-made clothing industry takes off.
1981	Ziaur Rahman assassinated in Chittagong.

- 1982 General H.M. Ershad takes over as dictator (1982–90).
- 1982 National Monument for the Martyrs in Savar is completed.
- 1983 Bangladesh parliament buildings are completed.
- 1985 National Archives and National Library opened.
- 1988 Major floods cover 60 per cent of Bangladesh for fifteen to twenty days.
- 1988 Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council formed.
- 1990 Popular uprising. Ershad forced out of power. Return to parliamentary democracy.
- 1991 General elections won by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Khaleda Zia becomes prime minister (1991–6).
- 1991 Cyclone kills 140,000 people in south-eastern Bangladesh.
- 1992 Nirmul Committee stages Gono Adalat (people's court).
- 1993 Fatwa against Taslima Nasrin.
- 1993 Groundwater arsenic poisoning discovered.
- 1996 General elections won by Awami League. Sheikh Hasina becomes prime minister (1996–2001).
- 1996 Liberation War Museum opened.
- 1996 Kolpona Chakma disappears.
- 1996 Thirty-year agreement with India over division of Ganges waters.
- 1997 December: peace agreement with JSS in Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- 1998 Major floods cover 60 per cent of Bangladesh for sixty-five days.
- 1998 Jamuna Bridge opened.
- 2000s Four-fifths of the population survives on less than \$2 a day and one third on less than \$1 a day.

- 2000 Bangladesh produces a surplus of food grains for the first time in its modern history.
- 2001 General elections won by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Khaleda Zia becomes prime minister (2001–6).
- 2001 Bangladesh Indigenous People’s Forum formed.
- 2006 Nobel Prize for Grameen Bank and Muhammad Yunus.
- 2006 Ready-made garments make up three-quarters of Bangladesh’s exports.
- 2007 January: general elections postponed and military-backed interim government installed.
- 2007 November: cyclone hits south-western coast, killing thousands and devastating the Sundarbans wetlands.
- 2007 Bangladesh has 150 million inhabitants. Dhaka has 14 million inhabitants.