[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-semi-protected](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-protected) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use British English](/wiki/Template:Use_British_English) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country) [Template:Contains Bangla text](/wiki/Template:Contains_Bangla_text) **Bangladesh** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), [Template:IPA-bn](/wiki/Template:IPA-bn), lit. "The country of [Bengal](/wiki/Bengal)"), officially the **People's Republic of Bangladesh** (গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ [*Gônôprôjatôntri Bangladesh*](/wiki/Romanisation_of_Bengali#Romanisation_reference)), is a sovereign country in [South Asia](/wiki/South_Asia). It forms the largest and eastern portion the ethno-linguistic region of [Bengal](/wiki/Bengal). Located at the apex of the [Bay of Bengal](/wiki/Bay_of_Bengal), Bangladesh is bordered by [India](/wiki/India) and [Myanmar](/wiki/Myanmar) and is separated from [Nepal](/wiki/Nepal) and [Bhutan](/wiki/Bhutan) by the narrow [Siliguri Corridor](/wiki/Siliguri_Corridor).[[1]](#cite_note-1) Bangladesh is the world's [eighth-most populous country](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population), the [fifth most populous in Asia](/wiki/List_of_Asian_countries_by_population) and the [third-most populous among Muslim-majority countries](/wiki/List_of_Muslim_majority_countries). The official [Bengali language](/wiki/Bengali_language) is the [tenth most spoken language in the world](/wiki/List_of_languages_by_number_of_speakers), which Bangladesh shares with the neighboring Indian states of [West Bengal](/wiki/West_Bengal) and [Tripura](/wiki/Tripura).

Three of Asia's largest rivers, the [Ganges](/wiki/Ganges) (locally known as the [Padma](/wiki/Padma_River)), the [Brahmaputra](/wiki/Brahmaputra) (locally known as the [Jamuna](/wiki/Jamuna_River_(Bangladesh))) and the [Meghna](/wiki/Meghna), flow through Bangladesh and form the fertile [Bengal delta](/wiki/Bengal_delta)- the largest delta in the world.[[2]](#cite_note-2) With rich [biodiversity](/wiki/Biodiversity), Bangladesh is home to [700 rivers](/wiki/List_of_rivers_in_Bangladesh), most of the [world's largest mangrove forest](/wiki/Sundarbans); rainforested and [tea](/wiki/Tea_production_in_Bangladesh)-growing [highlands](/wiki/List_of_mountains_in_Bangladesh); a 600 km (370 mi) coastline with one of the world's longest [beaches](/wiki/Cox's_Bazar); and various [islands](/wiki/List_of_islands_of_Bangladesh), including a [coral reef](/wiki/St._Martin's_Island). Bangladesh is one of the [most densely populated countries](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density) in the world, ranking alongside [South Korea](/wiki/South_Korea) and [Monaco](/wiki/Monaco). Urban centers are spread across the country, with the capital [Dhaka](/wiki/Dhaka) and the port city [Chittagong](/wiki/Chittagong) being the most prominent. The predominant ethnic group are [Bengalis](/wiki/Bengalis), along with numerous minorities, including [Chakmas](/wiki/Chakma_people), [Garos](/wiki/Garo_people), [Marmas](/wiki/Marma_people), [Tanchangyas](/wiki/Tanchangya_people), [Bisnupriya Manipuris](/wiki/Bisnupriya_Manipuri_people), [Santhals](/wiki/Santhal), [Biharis](/wiki/Bihari_people), [Oraons](/wiki/Kurukh_people), [Tripuris](/wiki/Tripuri_people), [Mundas](/wiki/Munda_people), [Rakhines](/wiki/Rakhine_people) and [Rohingyas](/wiki/Rohingya).

[Greater Bengal](/wiki/Greater_Bengal) was known to the ancient [Greeks](/wiki/Ancient_Greece) and [Romans](/wiki/Ancient_Rome) as [*Gangaridai*](/wiki/Gangaridai).[[3]](#cite_note-3) The people of the delta developed their own language, [script](/wiki/Bengali_script), [literature](/wiki/Bengali_literature), [music](/wiki/Bengali_music), art and [architecture](/wiki/Bengali_architecture). A [thalassocracy](/wiki/Thalassocracy) and an [entrepôt](/wiki/Entrepôt) of the historic [Silk Road](/wiki/Silk_Road),[[4]](#cite_note-4) Ancient Bengal established colonies on [Indian Ocean](/wiki/Indian_Ocean) islands and in [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia);[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) influenced the cultures of [Tibet](/wiki/Tibet) and [China](/wiki/China);[[7]](#cite_note-7) and had strong trade links with [Persia](/wiki/Persia), [Arabia](/wiki/Arabia) and the Mediterranean that focused on its lucrative cotton [muslin](/wiki/Muslin) textiles.[[8]](#cite_note-8) [Islam](/wiki/Islam), introduced in the first millennium, was adopted under the [Delhi Sultanate](/wiki/Delhi_Sultanate) as an official religion. Bengal was absorbed into the [Muslim world](/wiki/Muslim_world) and the achievements of pre-Islamic civilizations were embraced by the new polity. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the [Bengal Sultanate](/wiki/Bengal_Sultanate) emerged as a regional power in Asia. By the 16th and 17th centuries, the [Mughal Empire](/wiki/Mughal_Empire) controlled the region and its [Bengal Subah](/wiki/Bengal_Subah) province became a prosperous hub of trade. [British colonial conquest](/wiki/Bengal_Presidency) took place in the late-18th century. [Nationalism](/wiki/Nationalism), social reforms and the arts developed under the [British Raj](/wiki/British_Raj) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the region was a hotbed of the [anti-colonial movement](/wiki/Indian_Independence_Movement) in the [subcontinent](/wiki/Subcontinent).

The [first British partition of Bengal](/wiki/Partition_of_Bengal_(1905)) in 1905, that created the province of [Eastern Bengal and Assam](/wiki/Eastern_Bengal_and_Assam), set the precedent for the [Partition of British India](/wiki/Partition_of_British_India) in 1947, when [East Bengal](/wiki/East_Bengal) joined the [Dominion of Pakistan](/wiki/Dominion_of_Pakistan) and was renamed as [East Pakistan](/wiki/East_Pakistan) in 1955. It was separated from [West Pakistan](/wiki/West_Pakistan) by 1,400 kilometres (870 mi) of [Indian](/wiki/India) territory. East Pakistan was home to the country's demographic majority and its legislative capital.[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10) The [Bangladesh Liberation War](/wiki/Bangladesh_Liberation_War) in 1971 resulted in the secession of East Pakistan as a new republic with a [secular](/wiki/Secular) [multiparty](/wiki/Multiparty) [parliamentary democracy](/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy).[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) A short-lived [one party state](/wiki/BAKSAL) and several [military coups](/wiki/Military_coups_in_Bangladesh) in 1975 established a [presidential government](/wiki/Presidential_system). The restoration of the parliamentary republic in 1991 led to improved economic growth and relative stability. However, Bangladesh continues to face challenges of [poverty](/wiki/Poverty), [corruption](/wiki/Corruption), polarized politics, [human rights abuses](/wiki/Human_rights_abuses) by security forces, overpopulation and [global warming](/wiki/Global_warming). The country has achieved notable [human development](/wiki/Human_Development_Index) progress, including in health, education, gender equality, population control and food production.[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16) The poverty rate has reduced from 57% in 1990 to 25.6% in 2014.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Considered a [middle power](/wiki/Middle_power) in international affairs and a major [developing country](/wiki/Developing_country), Bangladesh is listed as one of the [Next Eleven](/wiki/Next_Eleven). It is a [unitary state](/wiki/Unitary_state) with [eight administrative divisions](/wiki/Divisions_of_Bangladesh) and an elected parliament called the [Jatiyo Sangshad](/wiki/Jatiyo_Sangshad). Bangladesh has the third-largest [economy](/wiki/Economy_of_Bangladesh) and [military](/wiki/Bangladesh_Armed_Forces) in South Asia after India and Pakistan. It is a founding member of [SAARC](/wiki/SAARC) and hosts the permanent secretariat of [BIMSTEC](/wiki/BIMSTEC).[[18]](#cite_note-18) [Ilyas Shahi dynasty](/wiki/Ilyas_Shahi_dynasty) built the [largest mosque in South Asia](/wiki/Adina_Mosque), and cultivated strong diplomatic and commercial ties with [Ming China](/wiki/Ming_China).[[54]](#cite_note-54)[[55]](#cite_note-55) [Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah](/wiki/Jalaluddin_Muhammad_Shah) was the first Bengali convert on the throne.[[53]](#cite_note-53) The Bengal Sultanate was noted for its [cultural pluralism](/wiki/Cultural_pluralism). [Muslims](/wiki/Muslims), [Hindus](/wiki/Hindus) and [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhists) jointly formed its civil-military services. The [Hussain Shahi sultans](/wiki/Hussain_Shahi_dynasty) promoted the development of [Bengali literature](/wiki/Bengali_literature).[[56]](#cite_note-56) It brought [Arakan](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Arakan) under its [suzerainty](/wiki/Suzerainty) for 100 years.[[57]](#cite_note-57) The sultanate was visited by numerous world [explorers](/wiki/Explorer), including [Niccolò de' Conti](/wiki/Niccolò_de'_Conti) of [Venice](/wiki/Republic_of_Venice), [Ibn Battuta](/wiki/Ibn_Battuta) of [Morocco](/wiki/Morocco) and [Admiral Zheng He](/wiki/Admiral_Zheng_He) of [China](/wiki/China). However, by the 16th century, the Bengal Sultanate began to disintegrate. The [Sur Empire](/wiki/Sur_Empire) overran Bengal in 1532 and built the [Grand Trunk Road](/wiki/Grand_Trunk_Road). [Hindu](/wiki/Hindu) [Rajas](/wiki/Raja) and the [Baro-Bhuyan](/wiki/Baro-Bhuyan) [zamindars](/wiki/Zamindar) gained control of large parts of the region, especially in the fertile [Bhati](/wiki/Bhati) zone. [Isa Khan](/wiki/Isa_Khan) was the [Rajput](/wiki/Rajput) leader of the Baro-Bhuyans based in [Sonargaon](/wiki/Sonargaon).[[58]](#cite_note-58) In the late 16th-century, the [Mughal Empire](/wiki/Mughal_Empire) led by [Akbar the Great](/wiki/Akbar_the_Great) began conquering the Bengal delta after the [Battle of Tukaroi](/wiki/Battle_of_Tukaroi),[[59]](#cite_note-59) where he defeated the Bengal Sultanate's last rulers, the [Karrani dynasty](/wiki/Karrani_dynasty). Dhaka was established as the Mughal provincial capital in 1608. The Mughals faced stiff resistance from the Baro-Bhuyans, Afghan warlords and zamindars, but were ultimately successful in conquering the whole of Bengal by 1666, when the [Portuguese](/wiki/Porto_Grande_De_Bengala) and Arakanese were expelled from Chittagong. Mughal rule ushered economic prosperity, agrarian reform and flourishing external trade, particularly in [muslin](/wiki/Muslin) and [silk](/wiki/Silk) textiles. Mughal Viceroys promoted agricultural expansion and turned Bengal into the rice basket of the Indian subcontinent. The [Sufis](/wiki/Sufi) gained increasing prominence. The [Baul](/wiki/Baul) movement, inspired by Sufism, also emerged under Mughal rule. The Bengali ethnic identity further crystallized during this period, and the region's inhabitants were given sufficient autonomy to cultivate their own customs and literature. The entire region was brought under a stable-long lasting administration.[[54]](#cite_note-54) By the 18th century, the [Bengal Subah](/wiki/Bengal_Subah) included the dominions of Bengal proper, [Bihar](/wiki/Bihar) and [Orissa](/wiki/Orissa). It was the wealthiest part of the subcontinent.[[60]](#cite_note-60) It generated 50% of Mughal GDP.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Its towns and cities were filled with Eurasian traders. [Dhaka](/wiki/Dhaka) became an important center of Mughal administration. The [Nawabs of Bengal](/wiki/Nawabs_of_Bengal) established an independent [principality](/wiki/Principality) in 1717, with their headquarters in [Murshidabad](/wiki/Murshidabad). The Nawabs granted increasing concessions to European trading powers. Matters reached a climax in 1757, when Nawab [Siraj-ud-Daulah](/wiki/Siraj-ud-Daulah) captured the British base at [Fort William](/wiki/Fort_William,_India), in an effort to stem the rising influence of the [East India Company](/wiki/East_India_Company). Siraj-ud-Daulah was betrayed by his general [Mir Jafar](/wiki/Mir_Jafar), who helped [Robert Clive](/wiki/Robert_Clive) defeat the last independent Nawab at the [Battle of Plassey](/wiki/Battle_of_Plassey) on 23 June 1757.[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63)

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### British Bengal[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|left|The first](/wiki/File:First_Ever_Steam_Engine_of_Bangladesh.jpg) [steam engine](/wiki/Steam_engine) in Eastern Bengal. Railways in Bangladesh date back to 1862, being one of the earliest rail networks in the world [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Curzon_hall_front.jpg)[Curzon Hall](/wiki/Curzon_Hall), named after [Lord Curzon](/wiki/Lord_Curzon), who is credited for the creation of [Eastern Bengal and Assam](/wiki/Eastern_Bengal_and_Assam) The defeat of the last independent Nawab of Bengal at the [Battle of Plassey](/wiki/Battle_of_Plassey) ushered the [rule of the British East India Company](/wiki/Company_rule_in_India) in 1757. The British displaced the ruling Muslim class of Bengal.[[64]](#cite_note-64) The [Bengal Presidency](/wiki/Bengal_Presidency) was established in 1765, with [Calcutta](/wiki/Calcutta) as its capital. The [Permanent Settlement](/wiki/Permanent_Settlement) created an oppressive feudal system. A number of deadly famines struck the region.

The [Mutiny of 1857](/wiki/Mutiny_of_1857) was initiated in the Presidency of Bengal, with major revolts by the [Bengal Army](/wiki/Bengal_Army) in [Dacca](/wiki/Dacca), Calcutta and [Chittagong](/wiki/Chittagong).[[65]](#cite_note-65)[[66]](#cite_note-66) Eastern Bengal witnessed numerous native rebellions, including the [Faraizi Movement](/wiki/Faraizi_Movement) by [Haji Shariatullah](/wiki/Haji_Shariatullah), the activities of [Titumir](/wiki/Titumir), the [Chittagong armoury raid](/wiki/Chittagong_armoury_raid) and revolutionary formations such as the [Anushilan Samiti](/wiki/Anushilan_Samiti). The [Bengal Renaissance](/wiki/Bengal_Renaissance) flowered as a result of educational and cultural institutions being established across the region, especially in East Bengal and the imperial colonial capital Calcutta. The Presidency of Bengal became the cradle of modern South Asian political and artistic expression. It included the notable contributions of [Raja Ram Mohan Roy](/wiki/Raja_Ram_Mohan_Roy), [Mir Mosharraf Hossain](/wiki/Mir_Mosharraf_Hossain), [Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar](/wiki/Ishwar_Chandra_Vidyasagar), [Sir Syed Ahmed Khan](/wiki/Sir_Syed_Ahmed_Khan), [Jagadish Chandra Bose](/wiki/Jagadish_Chandra_Bose), [Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah](/wiki/Khan_Bahadur_Ahsanullah), [Rabindranath Tagore](/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore), [Michael Madhusudan Dutt](/wiki/Michael_Madhusudan_Dutt), [Kazi Nazrul Islam](/wiki/Kazi_Nazrul_Islam) and [Begum Rokeya](/wiki/Begum_Rokeya). [Gopal Krishna Gokhle](/wiki/Gopal_Krishna_Gokhle), the mentor of [Mahatma Gandhi](/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi), remarked that "what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow".[[67]](#cite_note-67)[thumb|280px|The leading Bengali statesmen during the early 20th century:](/wiki/File:Bengal_PMs.png) [A. K. Fazlul Huq](/wiki/A._K._Fazlul_Huq), [Sir Khawaja Nazimuddin](/wiki/Khawaja_Nazimuddin) and [H. S. Suhrawardy](/wiki/Huseyn_Shaheed_Suhrawardy). During British rule, East Bengal developed a [plantation economy](/wiki/Plantation_economy) centered on the [jute trade](/wiki/Jute_trade) and [tea production](/wiki/Tea_production_in_Bangladesh). Its share in world jute supply peaked in the early 20th century, at over 80%.[[68]](#cite_note-68) The [Eastern Bengal Railway](/wiki/Eastern_Bengal_Railway) and the [Assam Bengal Railway](/wiki/Assam_Bengal_Railway) served as important trade routes, connecting the [Port of Chittagong](/wiki/Port_of_Chittagong) with a large hinterland.

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

The [Freedom of Intellect Movement](/wiki/Freedom_of_Intellect_Movement) thrived in the [University of Dacca](/wiki/University_of_Dacca). By the 1930s, the [Krishak Praja Party](/wiki/Krishak_Praja_Party) led by [A. K. Fazlul Huq](/wiki/A._K._Fazlul_Huq) and the [Swaraj Party](/wiki/Swaraj_Party) led by [C. R. Das](/wiki/Chittaranjan_Das) came to represent the new Bengali [middle class](/wiki/Middle_class). Huq became the [Prime Minister of Bengal](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Bengal) in 1937. With the breakdown of [Hindu](/wiki/Hindu)-[Muslim](/wiki/Muslim) unity in the British Raj, Huq allied with the Muslim League to present the [Lahore Resolution](/wiki/Lahore_Resolution) in 1940, which envisioned independent states in the eastern and northwestern subcontinent.

During the [Second World War](/wiki/Second_World_War), the [Japanese Air Force](/wiki/Imperial_Japanese_Army_Air_Force) conducted air raids in Chittagong in 1942, displacing several thousand people.[[69]](#cite_note-69)[[70]](#cite_note-70) The war-induced [Bengal famine of 1943](/wiki/Bengal_famine_of_1943) claimed the lives of over a million people. [Allied forces](/wiki/Allied_forces) were stationed in bases across East Bengal in support of the [Burma Campaign](/wiki/Burma_Campaign). [Axis](/wiki/Axis_powers)-allied [Subhash Chandra Bose](/wiki/Subhash_Chandra_Bose) also had a significant following in East Bengal.

The [Muslim League](/wiki/All-India_Muslim_League) formed a parliamentary government in Bengal in 1943, with Sir [Khawaja Nazimuddin](/wiki/Khawaja_Nazimuddin) and later [H. S. Suhrawardy](/wiki/H._S._Suhrawardy) as its premiers. At the [Indian provincial elections, 1946](/wiki/Indian_provincial_elections,_1946), the decisive victory of the Bengal Muslim League set the course for the [Partition of British India](/wiki/Partition_of_British_India) and the creation of the [Dominion of Pakistan](/wiki/Dominion_of_Pakistan) on 14 August 1947. [Assam](/wiki/Colonial_Assam) was partitioned in order to allow Bengali-speaking [Sylhet](/wiki/Sylhet_Division) to join [East Bengal](/wiki/East_Bengal). There was also an unsuccessful attempt to form a [United Bengal](/wiki/United_Bengal). The [Radcliffe Line](/wiki/Radcliffe_Line) divided Bengal on religious grounds, ceding Hindu-majority districts to the Indian dominion, and making Muslim-majority districts the eastern wing of Pakistan.

### Eastern wing of Pakistan[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Dominion_of_Pakistan_&_Indian_Controlled_Kashmir_(orthographic_projection).svg) [Dominion of Pakistan](/wiki/Dominion_of_Pakistan) in 1947, with [East Bengal](/wiki/East_Bengal) as its eastern wing.

[East Bengal](/wiki/East_Bengal) was the most populous province in the new [Pakistani federation](/wiki/State_of_Pakistan) led by [Governor General](/wiki/Governor_General_of_Pakistan) [Muhammad Ali Jinnah](/wiki/Muhammad_Ali_Jinnah) in 1947, with [Dacca](/wiki/Dacca) as the provincial capital.[[71]](#cite_note-71) While the [state of Pakistan](/wiki/State_of_Pakistan) was created as a homeland for [Muslims](/wiki/Muslims) of the former [British Raj](/wiki/British_Raj), East Bengal was also Pakistan's most cosmopolitan province, being home to peoples of different faiths, cultures and ethnic groups. In 1950, [land reform](/wiki/Land_reform) was accomplished in East Bengal with the abolishment of the [permanent settlement](/wiki/Permanent_settlement) and the feudal [zamindari](/wiki/Zamindar) system.[[72]](#cite_note-72) The successful [Bengali Language Movement](/wiki/Bengali_Language_Movement) in 1952 was the first sign of friction with [West Pakistan](/wiki/West_Pakistan).[[73]](#cite_note-73) The [One Unit](/wiki/One_Unit) scheme renamed the province as [East Pakistan](/wiki/East_Pakistan) in 1955. The [Awami League](/wiki/Awami_League) emerged as the political voice of the Bengali-speaking population,[[74]](#cite_note-74) with its leader [H. S. Suhrawardy](/wiki/H._S._Suhrawardy) becoming [Prime Minister of Pakistan](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Pakistan) in 1956. He was ousted after only a year in office due to tensions with West Pakistan's establishment and bureaucracy.[[75]](#cite_note-75) The [1956 Constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Pakistan_of_1956) ended [dominion status](/wiki/Dominion_of_Pakistan) with [Queen Elizabeth II](/wiki/Commonwealth_realm) as the last monarch of the country. Dissatisfaction with the central government increased over economic and cultural issues. The provincial government of [A. K. Fazlul Huq](/wiki/A._K._Fazlul_Huq) was dismissed on charges of inciting secession.[[76]](#cite_note-76) In 1957, the radical left-wing populist leader [Maulana Bhashani](/wiki/Maulana_Bhashani) warned that the eastern wing would *bid farewell* to Pakistan.[[77]](#cite_note-77) [thumb|Women students marching in defiance of the](/wiki/File:21_Feb_1953_Dhaka_University_female_students_procession.png) [Section 144](/wiki/Section_144) prohibition on assembly, during the [Bengali Language Movement](/wiki/Bengali_Language_Movement). The [first Pakistani military coup](/wiki/1958_Pakistani_coup_d'état) ushered the [dictatorship](/wiki/Dictatorship) of [Ayub Khan](/wiki/Ayub_Khan_(President_of_Pakistan)). In 1962, Dacca was designated as the legislative capital of Pakistan in an appeasement of growing Bengali political nationalism.[[78]](#cite_note-78) Khan's government also constructed the [Kaptai Dam](/wiki/Kaptai_Dam) which controversially displaced the [Chakma population](/wiki/Chakma_people) from their indigenous homeland in the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](/wiki/Chittagong_Hill_Tracts).[[79]](#cite_note-79) During the [1965 presidential election](/wiki/Pakistani_presidential_election,_1965), [Fatima Jinnah](/wiki/Fatima_Jinnah) failed to defeat Field Marshal Ayub Khan despite strong support in East Pakistan.[[80]](#cite_note-80) According to senior international bureaucrats in the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank), Pakistan applied extensive [economic discrimination](/wiki/Economic_discrimination) against the eastern wing, including higher government spending on West Pakistan, financial transfers from East to West and the use of the East's foreign exchange surpluses to finance the West's imports.[[81]](#cite_note-81) This was despite the fact that East Pakistan generated 70%[[82]](#cite_note-82) of Pakistan's export earnings with [jute](/wiki/Jute) and [tea](/wiki/Tea).[[81]](#cite_note-81) East Pakistani intellectuals crafted the [Six Points](/wiki/Six_point_movement) which called for greater regional [autonomy](/wiki/Autonomy), [free trade](/wiki/Free_trade) and economic independence. The Six Points were championed by Awami League President [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](/wiki/Sheikh_Mujibur_Rahman) in 1966, leading to his arrest by the government of President Field Marshal Ayub Khan on charges of treason. Rahman was released during the [1969 popular uprising](/wiki/1969_uprising_in_East_Pakistan) which ousted President Khan from power.

Ethnic and linguistic discrimination was abound in Pakistan's civil and military services, in which Bengalis were hugely under-represented. In Pakistan's central government, only 15% of offices were occupied by East Pakistanis.[[83]](#cite_note-83) They formed only 10% of the military.[[84]](#cite_note-84) Cultural discrimination also prevailed, causing the eastern wing to forge a distinct political identity.[[85]](#cite_note-85) Pakistan imposed bans on Bengali literature and music in state media, including the works of Nobel laureate [Rabindranath Tagore](/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore).[[86]](#cite_note-86) In 1970, a massive [cyclone](/wiki/1970_Bhola_cyclone) devastated the coast of East Pakistan killing up to half a million people.[[87]](#cite_note-87) The central government was criticized for its poor response.[[88]](#cite_note-88)After the elections of December 1970, calls for the independence of Bangladesh became stronger.[[89]](#cite_note-89)

### Genocide and war of independence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|A DVD reissue cover of the](/wiki/File:Concert_For_Bangladesh_Cover.jpg) [Concert for Bangladesh](/wiki/Concert_for_Bangladesh) held in 1971, which was the first [benefit concert](/wiki/Benefit_concert) in history and raised funds for refugees fleeing the [Bangladesh genocide](/wiki/Bangladesh_genocide) [thumb|left|Refugees from the Bangladesh Genocide in 1971](/wiki/File:1971_Bangladesh_refugees.jpg) The anger of the Bengali population was compounded when [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](/wiki/Sheikh_Mujibur_Rahman), whose Awami League had won a majority in Parliament in the 1970 elections, was blocked from taking office.[[90]](#cite_note-90) A massive [civil disobedience](/wiki/Civil_disobedience) movement erupted across East Pakistan, with open calls for independence.[[91]](#cite_note-91) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed a [huge pro-independence rally](/wiki/7th_March_Speech_of_Sheikh_Mujibur_Rahman) in Dacca on 7 March 1971. The [Bangladeshi flag](/wiki/Flag_of_Bangladesh) was hoisted for the first time on 23 March 1971, Pakistan's [Republic Day](/wiki/Republic_Day_(Pakistan)).[[92]](#cite_note-92) On 26 March 1971, the Pakistani [military junta](/wiki/Military_junta)[[93]](#cite_note-93) led by [Yahya Khan](/wiki/Yahya_Khan) launched [Operation Searchlight](/wiki/Operation_Searchlight), a sustained military assault on East Pakistan,[[94]](#cite_note-94)[[95]](#cite_note-95) and detained the [Prime Minister-elect](/wiki/Prime_Minister-elect)[[96]](#cite_note-96)[[97]](#cite_note-97) under military custody.[[98]](#cite_note-98) The [Pakistan Army](/wiki/Pakistan_Army), with the help of supporting militias, massacred Bengali [students](/wiki/1971_Dhaka_University_massacre), [intellectuals](/wiki/1971_killing_of_Bengali_intellectuals), politicians, civil servants and military defectors during the [1971 Bangladesh genocide](/wiki/1971_Bangladesh_genocide).[[99]](#cite_note-99) Several million refugees fled to neighboring [India](/wiki/India). Estimates for those killed throughout the war range between 300,000 and 3 million.[[100]](#cite_note-100) Global public opinion turned against Pakistan as news of atrocities spread,[[101]](#cite_note-101) with the Bangladesh Movement gaining support from prominent political and cultural figures in the West, including [Ted Kennedy](/wiki/Ted_Kennedy), [George Harrison](/wiki/George_Harrison), [Bob Dylan](/wiki/Bob_Dylan), [Joan Baez](/wiki/Joan_Baez), [Victoria Ocampo](/wiki/Victoria_Ocampo) and [Andre Malraux](/wiki/Andre_Malraux).[[102]](#cite_note-102)[[103]](#cite_note-103)[[104]](#cite_note-104)[[105]](#cite_note-105) The [Concert for Bangla Desh](/wiki/Concert_for_Bangla_Desh) was held at [Madison Square Garden](/wiki/Madison_Square_Garden) in [New York City](/wiki/New_York_City) to raise funds for Bangladeshi refugees. It was the first major [benefit concert](/wiki/Benefit_concert) in history and was organized by Beatles star George Harrison and Indian Bengali sitarist [Ravi Shankar](/wiki/Ravi_Shankar).[[106]](#cite_note-106) During the [liberation war](/wiki/Bangladesh_Liberation_War), Bengali nationalists announced a [declaration of independence](/wiki/Bangladeshi_Declaration_of_Independence) and formed the [Mukti Bahini](/wiki/Mukti_Bahini) (the Bangladeshi National Liberation Army). The [Provisional Government of Bangladesh](/wiki/Provisional_Government_of_Bangladesh) operated in exile from [Calcutta](/wiki/Calcutta), India. Led by General [M. A. G. Osmani](/wiki/M._A._G._Osmani) and eleven [Sector Commanders](/wiki/List_of_sectors_in_Bangladesh_Liberation_War), the Mukti Bahini held the Bengali countryside during the war, and waged wide-scale [guerrilla operations](/wiki/Guerrilla_war) against Pakistani forces. Neighboring [India](/wiki/India) and its leader [Indira Gandhi](/wiki/Indira_Gandhi), a longstanding nemesis of Pakistan, provided crucial support to the Bangladesh Forces and intervened in support of the provisional government on 3 December 1971. The [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) and the [United States](/wiki/United_States) dispatched naval forces to the Bay of Bengal amid a [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) standoff during the [Indo-Pakistani War](/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_War_of_1971). Lasting for nine months, the entire war ended with the [surrender of Pakistan's military](/wiki/Surrender_of_Pakistan) to the Bangladesh-India Allied Forces on 16 December 1971.[[107]](#cite_note-107)<ref name=Rummel-8-2>Rummel, Rudolph J. (1997) ["Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900"](http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/SOD.CHAP8.HTM). Transaction Publishers, Rutgers University. ISBN 3-8258-4010-7, Chapter 8, [Table 8.2 Pakistan Genocide in Bangladesh Estimates, Sources, and Calculations](http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/SOD.TAB8.2.GIF).</ref> Under international pressure, Pakistan released Mujib from imprisonment on 8 January 1972, after which he was flown by the [Royal Air Force](/wiki/Royal_Air_Force) to a million strong homecoming in Dhaka.[[108]](#cite_note-108)[[109]](#cite_note-109) [Indian](/wiki/India) troops were withdrawn by 12 March 1972, three months after the war ended.[[110]](#cite_note-110) The cause of Bangladeshi self-determination was widely recognized around the world.[[101]](#cite_note-101) By the time of its admission for UN membership in August 1972, the new state was recognized by 86 countries.[[101]](#cite_note-101) Pakistan recognized Bangladesh in 1974 after pressure from most of the [Muslim world](/wiki/Muslim_world).[[111]](#cite_note-111)

### Bangladeshi Republic[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|Bangladesh's founding leader](/wiki/File:Mujib_and_Ford.jpg) [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](/wiki/Sheikh_Mujibur_Rahman), as Prime Minister, with U.S. President [Gerald Ford](/wiki/Gerald_Ford) at the [Oval Office](/wiki/Oval_Office) in 1974 After independence, Bangladesh became a [secular democracy](/wiki/Secular_democracy) and a [republic within the Commonwealth](/wiki/Republics_in_the_Commonwealth_of_Nations). The world's 7th most populous nation at the time was ravaged by wartime devastation and widespread poverty, receiving massive international aid as a result. It joined the [Non-Aligned Movement](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement) and the [OIC](/wiki/OIC) in 1973, followed by the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) in 1974. The Mujib administration signed a 25-year [friendship treaty](/wiki/Indo-Bangladeshi_Treaty_of_Friendship,_Cooperation_and_Peace) with [India](/wiki/India) and was courted by [Western](/wiki/Western_world) and [Eastern bloc](/wiki/Eastern_bloc) powers. Bangladesh expressed strong solidarity with Arab countries during the [Arab-Israeli War in 1973](/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War), sending medical teams to [Egypt](/wiki/Egypt) and Syria.[[112]](#cite_note-112)[[113]](#cite_note-113) Mujib's government faced growing political agitation from left-wing groups, especially the [National Socialist Party](/wiki/Jashod). [Chakma](/wiki/Chakma_people) politician [M. N. Larma](/wiki/Manabendra_Narayan_Larma) protested the lack of recognition for indigenous Chittagong Hill Tracts minorities in the new [constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Bangladesh).[[114]](#cite_note-114) Mujib briefly declared a [state of emergency](/wiki/State_of_emergency) to maintain law and order.

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh signed [tripartite agreement](/wiki/Delhi_Agreement) in 1973 calling for peace and stability in the subcontinent.[[115]](#cite_note-115) A nationwide [famine](/wiki/Bangladesh_famine_of_1974) occurred in 1974.[[116]](#cite_note-116) In early 1975, Mujib initiated [one party socialist rule](/wiki/BAKSAL). On 15 August 1975, Mujib and most of his family members were [assassinated](/wiki/Assassination_of_Sheikh_Mujibur_Rahman) by mid-level army officers during a [military coup](/wiki/Military_coup).[[117]](#cite_note-117) Vice President Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed was sworn in as President, with most of Mujib's cabinet intact. Bangladesh was placed under [martial law](/wiki/Martial_law).[[118]](#cite_note-118) Mushtaq [interned](/wiki/Internment) four prominent associates of Mujib, including Bangladesh's first prime minister [Tajuddin Ahmad](/wiki/Tajuddin_Ahmad). Two Army uprisings on 3 and 7 November 1975 led to a reorganised structure of power. Between the two coups, the four interned Awami League leaders were [assassinated](/wiki/Jail_Killing_Day) by army men in Dhaka Central Jail. Mushtaq was replaced by [Justice Abu Sayem](/wiki/Abu_Sadat_Mohammad_Sayem) as President, while the three chiefs of the armed services become martial law administrators. A technocrat cabinet was formed with [Moudud Ahmed](/wiki/Moudud_Ahmed) as Deputy Prime Minister. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to recognize the provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam after the withdrawal of U.S. forces.[[118]](#cite_note-118) [thumb|170px|](/wiki/File:Mr_and_Mrs_Zia_1979.jpg)[President](/wiki/President_of_Bangladesh) [Ziaur Rahman](/wiki/Ziaur_Rahman) and erstwhile first lady [Khaleda Zia](/wiki/Khaleda_Zia) being hosted by the Dutch royal family in 1979.[thumb|352x352px|left|](/wiki/File:ORION_Group_constructed_the_highest_building_in_the_country_City_Centre.jpg)[City Centre Bangladesh](/wiki/City_Centre_Bangladesh), one of the tallest skyscrapers constructed in Bangladesh following the country's increased economic growth in the 2000s Lieutenant General [Ziaur Rahman](/wiki/Ziaur_Rahman) took over the presidency in 1977 when Justice Sayem resigned. In 1979, President Zia reinstated multi-party politics and restored civilian rule. He promoted [free markets](/wiki/Free_market) and founded the [Bangladesh Nationalist Party](/wiki/Bangladesh_Nationalist_Party) (BNP). Zia reoriented Bangladesh's foreign policy, moving away from the Awami League's strong ties with India and Soviet Union, and pursued closer relations with [the West](/wiki/Western_world).[[119]](#cite_note-119) He opposed the [Soviet invasion of Afghanistan](/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Afghanistan). Domestically, Zia faced as many as 21 coup attempts.[[120]](#cite_note-120) An [insurgency](/wiki/Chittagong_Hill_Tracts_conflict) began in the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](/wiki/Chittagong_Hill_Tracts), due to demands by the region's indigenous people for [autonomy](/wiki/Autonomy). The [Bangladesh Army](/wiki/Bangladesh_Army) was accused of persecuting the area's diverse ethnic minorities. Zia also advocated the idea of a [South Asian](/wiki/South_Asia) regional community, inspired by the formation of [ASEAN](/wiki/ASEAN).[[120]](#cite_note-120) A military crackdown on [Rohingyas](/wiki/Rohingya) in neighboring [Burma](/wiki/Burma) led to an exodus of several hundred thousand refugees into southeastern Bangladesh.[[115]](#cite_note-115) Zia's rule ended when he was [assassinated](/wiki/Assassination_of_Ziaur_Rahman) by elements of the military in 1981.[[117]](#cite_note-117) He was succeeded by [Abdus Sattar](/wiki/Abdus_Sattar_(president)), who served in office for less than a year.

Bangladesh's next major ruler was Lieutenant General [Hussain Muhammad Ershad](/wiki/Hussain_Muhammad_Ershad). As President, Ershad pursued administrative reforms, including a [devolution](/wiki/Devolution) scheme which divided the country into [64 districts](/wiki/Districts_of_Bangladesh) and [5 divisions](/wiki/Divisions_of_Bangladesh). Ershad hosted the founding summit of [SAARC](/wiki/SAARC) in Dhaka in 1985, which brought together 7 South Asian countries, including [India](/wiki/India), [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), [Nepal](/wiki/Nepal), [Sri Lanka](/wiki/Sri_Lanka), the [Maldives](/wiki/Maldives), [Bhutan](/wiki/Bhutan) and Bangladesh, into a landmark regional union.[[121]](#cite_note-121) He also expanded the country's road network and started important projects like the [Jamuna Bridge](/wiki/Jamuna_Bridge). In 1986, Ershad restored civilian rule and founded the [Jatiya Party](/wiki/Jatiya_Party_(Ershad)). Elections were held in 1986 and 1988. Ershad sent Bangladeshi troops to join the US-led coalition in the [Persian Gulf War](/wiki/Gulf_War) after a request from [King Fahd](/wiki/King_Fahd).[[122]](#cite_note-122) Ershad faced a revolt by opposition parties and the public in 1990, which coupled with pressure from Western donors for democratic reforms, forced him to resign on 6 December that year. He handed over power to Justice [Shahabuddin Ahmed](/wiki/Shahabuddin_Ahmed). Ershad was later indicted and convicted on [corruption](/wiki/Corruption) charges.[[115]](#cite_note-115) [thumb|2006](/wiki/File:Muhammad_Yunus_com_presidente_Lula.jpg) [Nobel Peace Prize](/wiki/Nobel_Peace_Prize) winner [Muhammad Yunus](/wiki/Muhammad_Yunus) with former Brazilian president [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva](/wiki/Luiz_Inácio_Lula_da_Silva) In 1991, Bangladesh reverted to [parliamentary democracy](/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy). Former first lady [Khaleda Zia](/wiki/Khaleda_Zia) led the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to victory at the [general election in 1991](/wiki/Bangladeshi_general_election,_1991) and became the first female Prime Minister in Bangladeshi history. Zia's finance minister [Saifur Rahman](/wiki/Saifur_Rahman_(politician)) launched a series of [economic reforms](/wiki/Economic_reform) aimed at liberalizing the Bangladeshi economy, mirroring similar initiatives by [Manmohan Singh](/wiki/Manmohan_Singh) in India in 1991. Prime Minister Zia was forced to implement the [caretaker government](/wiki/Caretaker_government_of_Bangladesh) provision in the constitution in 1996 by the opposition.[[123]](#cite_note-123) At the [next election in 1996](/wiki/Bangladeshi_general_election,_1996), the [Awami League](/wiki/Awami_League), headed by [Sheikh Hasina](/wiki/Sheikh_Hasina), one of Mujib's surviving daughters, returned to power after 21 years. Hasina ended the Chittagong Hill Tracts insurgency after a [peace accord](/wiki/Chittagong_Hill_Tracts_Peace_Accord) with [PCJSS](/wiki/Parbatya_Chattagram_Jana_Samhati_Samiti) rebels. She also secured a treaty with India on [sharing the water of the Ganges](/wiki/Sharing_the_water_of_the_Ganges). Hasina held a [trilateral](/wiki/Delhi_Agreement) economic summit between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1999 and helped establish the [D8 grouping](/wiki/Developing_8_Countries) with [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey).[[123]](#cite_note-123) The [economy](/wiki/Economy_of_Bangladesh) took a downturn with a depletion of foreign exchange reserves.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Hasina also refused to export Bangladesh's [natural gas](/wiki/Natural_gas), despite major investment offers from international oil companies. The Awami League lost again to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in the [2001 election](/wiki/Bangladeshi_general_election,_2001). In her second term as Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement with [China](/wiki/China).[[125]](#cite_note-125) The economy picked up steam from 2003, with a GDP growth rate of 6% in spite of the 2005 floods. Zia faced criticism for her alliance with the [Jamaat-e-Islami](/wiki/Jamaat-e-Islami), which was accused of war crimes in 1971, and accusations against her son [Tarique Rahman](/wiki/Tarique_Rahman) of corruption. The Awami League waged a series of strikes against the government after an assassination attempt on former premier Sheikh Hasina. Widespread political unrest followed the end of the BNP's tenure in late October 2006. A [caretaker government](/wiki/Caretaker_government) led by the pro-BNP President [Iajuddin Ahmed](/wiki/Iajuddin_Ahmed) worked to bring the parties to election within the required ninety days, but was accused by opposition parties of being biased. At the last minute, the Awami League announced an election boycott.

On 11 January 2007, the [Bangladesh Armed Forces](/wiki/Bangladesh_Armed_Forces) intervened to support both a [state of emergency](/wiki/2006-2008_Bangladeshi_political_crisis) and a continuing but neutral caretaker government under a newly appointed [Chief Advisor](/wiki/Chief_Advisor) [Fakhruddin Ahmed](/wiki/Fakhruddin_Ahmed), the former governor of the [Bangladesh Bank](/wiki/Bangladesh_Bank). Ahmed strengthened the [Anti Corruption Commission](/wiki/Anti_Corruption_Commission_Bangladesh) and launched an anti-graft drive, detaining more than 160 people, including politicians, civil servants, businessmen and two sons of Khaleda Zia. The Awami League won a landslide majority in the [2008 general election](/wiki/Bangladeshi_general_election,_2008).[[126]](#cite_note-126)[[127]](#cite_note-127) The BNP boycotted the [general election in 2014](/wiki/Bangladeshi_general_election,_2014) due to Sheikh Hasina's cancellation of the caretaker government system.

Bangladesh has significantly reduced poverty since it gained independence, with the poverty rate coming down from 57% in 1990[[128]](#cite_note-128) Historically, laws were written in English and were not translated into Bangla until 1987. Bangladesh's Constitution and all laws are now in both English and Bangla.[[244]](#cite_note-244) Stranded Pakistani Biharis since 1971 living in various camps in Bangladesh speak [Urdu](/wiki/Urdu).[[245]](#cite_note-245) Similarly, Rohingya Refugees from [Burma](/wiki/Burma) since 1978 living in various camps in Bangladesh speak [Rohingya](/wiki/Rohingya_language).[[246]](#cite_note-246) There are also several [indigenous minority languages](/wiki/Languages_of_Bangladesh).

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:New_Minner_of_masjid.JPG)[Minaret](/wiki/Minaret) of the [Baitul Mukarram](/wiki/Baitul_Mukarram) [National Mosque](/wiki/National_Mosque) in Dhaka [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box) [Islam](/wiki/Islam_in_Bangladesh) is the largest religion in Bangladesh, adhered to by about 87% of the population. The country is home to most [Bengali Muslims](/wiki/Bengali_Muslims), the second largest ethnic group in the [Muslim world](/wiki/Muslim_world). The majority of Bangladeshi Muslims are [Sunni](/wiki/Sunni), followed by the [Shia](/wiki/Shia) and [Ahmadiya](/wiki/Ahmadiya). Roughly 4% are [non-denominational Muslims](/wiki/Non-denominational_Muslims).[[247]](#cite_note-247) Bangladesh has the fourth-largest Muslim population in the world and is the third-largest [Muslim-majority](/wiki/Muslim_world) country after Indonesia and Pakistan.[[248]](#cite_note-248)[Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image) [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism_in_Bangladesh) is followed by about 12% of the population, with most being [Bengali Hindus](/wiki/Bengali_Hindu). Bangladeshi Hindus are the country's second biggest religious group and the third largest Hindu community in the world after those of India and [Nepal](/wiki/Nepal). Hindus in Bangladesh are almost evenly distributed in all regions, with significant concentrations in northern, northeastern and southwestern parts of the country.

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

[Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) is the fourth largest religion at 0.3%.[[249]](#cite_note-249) The remaining 0.1% population follow various folk religions and animistic faiths.

Many people in Bangladesh practice [Sufism](/wiki/Sufism), which has a long heritage in the region.[[250]](#cite_note-250) The largest gathering of Muslims in the country is the [Bishwa Ijtema](/wiki/Bishwa_Ijtema), held annually by the [Tablighi Jamaat](/wiki/Tablighi_Jamaat). The Ijtema is the second largest Muslim congregation in the world after the [Hajj](/wiki/Hajj).

The [Constitution of Bangladesh](/wiki/Constitution_of_Bangladesh) declares Islam as the [state religion](/wiki/State_religion), but bans religion-based politics. It proclaims equal recognition of [Hindus](/wiki/Hindu), [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhist), [Christians](/wiki/Christian) and people of all faiths.[[251]](#cite_note-251) Earlier in 1972, Bangladesh became the first constitutionally secular country in South Asia.[[252]](#cite_note-252) The [U. S. State Department](/wiki/U._S._State_Department) describes Bangladesh as a [secular](/wiki/Secular) [pluralistic](/wiki/Cultural_pluralism) [democracy](/wiki/Democracy).[[253]](#cite_note-253)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Bangladesh has a low [literacy rate](/wiki/Literacy_rate), estimated at 66.5% for males and 63.1% for females in 2014.[[234]](#cite_note-234) The educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The government operates many schools in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. It subsidises parts of the funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government funds more than 15 state universities through the [University Grants Commission](/wiki/University_Grants_Commission_of_Bangladesh).

The education system is divided into five levels: Primary (from grades 1 to 5), Junior Secondary (from grades 6 to 8), Secondary (from grades 9 to 10), Higher Secondary (from grades 11 to 12) and tertiary.<ref name=CompEd>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> The five years of lower secondary education concluded with a [Secondary School Certificate](/wiki/Secondary_School_Certificate) (SSC) examination, but since 2009 it concludes with a Primary Education Closing (PEC) examination. Earlier, students who pass this examination proceed to four years secondary or matriculation training, which culminate in a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination.[[254]](#cite_note-254)[thumb|Bangladeshi schoolchildren performing on a stage](/wiki/File:Students_of_Bangladesh_Bank_Colony_High_School_performed_in_Rajat_Jayanti_(01).jpg) Primary Education Closing (PEC) passed examinees proceed to three years Junior Secondary, which culminate in a [Junior School Certificate](/wiki/Junior_School_Certificate) (JSC) Examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two years secondary or matriculation training, which culminate in a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two years of Higher Secondary or intermediate training, which culminate in a [Higher Secondary School Certificate](/wiki/Higher_Secondary_School_Certificate) (HSC) examination.[[254]](#cite_note-254) Education is mainly offered in Bengali, but English is commonly taught and used. A large number of Muslim families send their children to attend part-time courses or even to pursue full-time religious education, which is imparted in Bengali and [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language) in madrasahs.[[254]](#cite_note-254) Bangladesh conforms fully to the [Education For All](/wiki/Education_For_All) (EFA) objectives, the [Millennium Development Goals](/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals) (MDG) and international declarations. Article 17 of the [Bangladesh Constitution](/wiki/Bangladesh_Constitution) provides that all children between the ages of six and ten years receive a basic education free of charge.

[Universities in Bangladesh](/wiki/Universities_in_Bangladesh) are mainly categorized into three types: public (government owned and subsidized), private (private sector owned universities) and international (operated and funded by international organizations). Bangladesh has 34 public, 64 private and two international [universities](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Bangladesh). [Bangladesh National University](/wiki/Bangladesh_National_University) has the largest enrollment among them and [University of Dhaka](/wiki/University_of_Dhaka) (established 1921) is the oldest. [Islamic University of Technology](/wiki/Islamic_University_of_Technology), commonly known as IUT, is a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation ([OIC](/wiki/OIC)), representing 57 member countries from Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. [Asian University for Women](/wiki/Asian_University_for_Women) in Chittagong is the preeminent liberal arts university for women in South Asia, representing 14 countries from Asia. The faculty members are from many well-known academic institutions of North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East.[[255]](#cite_note-255) [BUET](/wiki/BUET), [CUET](/wiki/CUET), [BUTex](/wiki/BUTex), [DUET](/wiki/DUET) are among the six public engineering universities in the country. There are some science and technology universities including [SUST](/wiki/SUST), [MIST](/wiki/Military_Institute_of_Science_and_Technology), [PUST](/wiki/Pabna_University_of_Science_&_Technology), etc.

Bangladeshi universities are accredited by and affiliated with the [University Grants Commission](/wiki/University_Grants_Commission_(Bangladesh)) (UGC), created according to the Presidential Order (P.O. No 10 of 1973) of the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.[[256]](#cite_note-256) Medical education is provided by 29 government and some other private [medical colleges](/wiki/List_of_medical_colleges_in_Bangladesh). All medical colleges are affiliated with [Ministry of Health and Family Welfare](/wiki/Ministry_of_Health_and_Family_Welfare_(Bangladesh)).

Recently the literacy rate of Bangladesh has improved as it stands at 71% [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) due to the modernization of schools and education funds. At present, 16,087 schools and 2,363 colleges were getting Monthly Pay Order (MPO) facilities. 27,558 madrasas, and technical and vocational institutions were enlisted for the facilities. 6036 educational institutions were outside the MPO coverage and that the ruling party enlisted 1,624 private schools for MPO in 2010.[[257]](#cite_note-257)[[258]](#cite_note-258)

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Health and education levels remain relatively low, although they have improved recently as poverty (26% at 2012[[259]](#cite_note-259)) levels have decreased. In the rural areas, village doctors with little or no formal training constitute 62% of the healthcare providers practicing modern medicine and the formally trained providers are occupying a mere 4% of the total health workforce. A survey conducted by Future Health Systems revealed significant deficiencies in treatment practices of village doctors, with a wide prevalence of harmful and inappropriate drug prescriptions.[[260]](#cite_note-260) There are market incentives for accessing health care through informal providers and it is important to understand these markets in order to facilitate collaboration across actors and institutions in order to provide incentives for better performance.[[261]](#cite_note-261) A 2007 study of 1000 households in rural Bangladesh found that direct costs (payment to formal and informal health care providers) and indirect costs (loss of earnings associated with workdays lost because of illness) associated with illness were important deterrents to accessing health care from qualified healthcare providers.[[260]](#cite_note-260) A community survey with 6183 individuals in rural Bangladesh found a clear gender difference in treatment-seeking behaviour, with women less likely to seek treatment compared to men.[[262]](#cite_note-262) The use of skilled birth attendants, however, has risen between 2005 and 2007 by women in all wealth quintiles except the highest quintile.[[263]](#cite_note-263) A pilot community empowerment tool, called a health watch, was successfully developed and implemented in south-eastern Bangladesh in order to improve uptake and monitoring of public health services.[[264]](#cite_note-264) The poor health conditions in Bangladesh is attributed by the lack of healthcare and services provision by the government. The total expenditure on healthcare as a percentage of their GDP was only 3.35% in 2009, according to a World Bank report published in 2010.[[265]](#cite_note-265) The number of hospital beds per 10,000 population is 4.[[266]](#cite_note-266) The General government expenditure on healthcare as a percentage of total government expenditure was only 7.9% [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) and the citizens pay most of their health care bills as the out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of private expenditure on health is 96.5%.[[265]](#cite_note-265) [Malnutrition](/wiki/Malnutrition) has been a persistent problem for the poverty-stricken country. The [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank) estimates that Bangladesh is ranked 1st in the world of the number of children suffering from [malnutrition](/wiki/Malnutrition).[[267]](#cite_note-267)[[268]](#cite_note-268) In Bangladesh, 26% of the population are undernourished[[269]](#cite_note-269) and 46% of the children suffers from moderate to severe underweight problem.[[270]](#cite_note-270) 43% of children under 5 years old are stunted. One in five preschool age children are vitamin A deficient and one in two are anemic.[[271]](#cite_note-271) Child malnutrition in Bangladesh is amongst the highest in the world. Two-thirds of the children, under the age of five, are under-nourished and about 60% of them, who are under six, are stunted.[[272]](#cite_note-272) More than 45 percent of rural families and 76 percent of urban families were below the acceptable caloric intake level.[[273]](#cite_note-273)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

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### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Tagorenazrul.png)[Rabindranath Tagore](/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore), author of the [national anthem](/wiki/National_Anthem_of_Bangladesh), and [Kazi Nazrul Islam](/wiki/Kazi_Nazrul_Islam), the [National Poet](/wiki/National_Poet) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Bangla_Academy_Inside_2_by_Ashfaq.jpg) [Bangla Academy](/wiki/Bangla_Academy) The oldest evidence of writing in Bangladesh is the Mahasthan [Brahmi](/wiki/Brahmi) Inscription, which dates back to the 3rd century BCE.[[274]](#cite_note-274) During the [Gupta Empire](/wiki/Gupta_Empire), [Sanskrit literature](/wiki/Sanskrit_literature) thrived in the region. [Bengali](/wiki/Bengali_language) developed from [Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit) and [Magadhi Prakrit](/wiki/Magadhi_Prakrit) in the 11th century. [Bengali literature](/wiki/Bengali_literature) is a millennium old tradition. The [Charyapada](/wiki/Charyapada) are the earliest examples of Bengali poetry. [Sufi](/wiki/Sufi) spiritualism inspired many [Bengali Muslim](/wiki/Bengali_Muslim) writers. During the [Bengal Sultanate](/wiki/Bengal_Sultanate), medieval Bengali writers were influenced by [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_literature) and [Persian works](/wiki/Persian_literature). [Syed Alaol](/wiki/Alaol) was a noted secular poet and translator. The [Chandidas](/wiki/Chandidas) are an example of [Bangladeshi folk literature](/wiki/Bangladeshi_folk_literature) which developed during the Middle Ages. The [Bengal Renaissance](/wiki/Bengal_Renaissance) shaped the emergence of modern Bengali literature, including novels, short stories and [science fiction](/wiki/Bengali_science_fiction). [Rabindranath Tagore](/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore) was the first non-European laureate of the [Nobel Prize in Literature](/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Literature) and is described as the Bengali Shakespeare.[[275]](#cite_note-275) [Kazi Nazrul Islam](/wiki/Kazi_Nazrul_Islam) was a revolutionary poet who espoused spiritual rebellion against colonialism and fascism. [Begum Rokeya](/wiki/Begum_Rokeya) was a pioneer of [Bengali writing in English](/wiki/Bangladeshi_English_literature), with her early of work of [feminist science fiction](/wiki/Feminist_science_fiction). Other renaissance icons included [Michael Madhusudan Dutt](/wiki/Michael_Madhusudan_Dutt) and [Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay](/wiki/Sarat_Chandra_Chattopadhyay).

The eminent writer [Syed Mujtaba Ali](/wiki/Syed_Mujtaba_Ali) is noted for his cosmopolitan Bengali worldview.[[276]](#cite_note-276) [Humayun Ahmed](/wiki/Humayun_Ahmed) was a popular writer of modern Bangladeshi [magical realism](/wiki/Magical_realism) and [science fiction](/wiki/Science_fiction). [Shamsur Rahman](/wiki/Shamsur_Rahman_(poet)) was the poet laureate of Bangladesh for many years. [Jasimuddin](/wiki/Jasimuddin) was a renowned pastoral poet. [Farrukh Ahmed](/wiki/Farrukh_Ahmed), [Sufia Kamal](/wiki/Sufia_Kamal), [Kaiser Haq](/wiki/Kaiser_Haq) and [Nirmalendu Goon](/wiki/Nirmalendu_Goon) are important figures of modern Bangladeshi poetry. Notable writers of Bangladeshi novels include [Mir Mosharraf Hossain](/wiki/Mir_Mosharraf_Hossain), [Akhteruzzaman Elias](/wiki/Akhteruzzaman_Elias), [Syed Waliullah](/wiki/Syed_Waliullah), [Shahidullah Kaiser](/wiki/Shahidullah_Kaiser), [Shawkat Osman](/wiki/Shawkat_Osman), [Selina Hossain](/wiki/Selina_Hossain), [Taslima Nasreen](/wiki/Taslima_Nasreen), [Haripada Datta](/wiki/Haripada_Datta), [Razia Khan](/wiki/Razia_Khan), [Anisul Hoque](/wiki/Anisul_Hoque), [Al Mahmud](/wiki/Al_Mahmud), [Bipradash Barua](/wiki/Bipradash_Barua), [Tahmima Anam](/wiki/Tahmima_Anam), [Neamat Imam](/wiki/Neamat_Imam), [Monica Ali](/wiki/Monica_Ali) and [Zia Haider Rahman](/wiki/Zia_Haider_Rahman). Many Bangladeshi writers, such as [Muhammad Zafar Iqbal](/wiki/Muhammad_Zafar_Iqbal), [K. Anis Ahmed](/wiki/K._Anis_Ahmed) and [Farah Ghuznavi](/wiki/Farah_Ghuznavi), are acclaimed for their [short stories](/wiki/Short_stories).

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

### Women in Bangladesh[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Although, [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), several women occupy major political office in Bangladesh, the women of the country continue to suffer under a patriarchal social regime where violence is common.<ref name=whispers>[WHISPERS TO VOICES Gender and Social Transformation in Bangladesh](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/03/25/000334955_20080325105524/Rendered/PDF/430450NWP0BD0gender0Box0327344B01PUBLIC1.pdf) worldbank.org 2008</ref> Female wage rates in the 1980s were low, typically ranging between 20 and 30 percent of male wage rates.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Whereas in India and Pakistan women participate less in the workforce as their education increases, in Bangladesh there is an opposite trend.<ref name=whispers/>

Bengal has a long history of [feminist activism](/wiki/Feminist_activism) dating back to the 19th century. [Roquia Sakhawat Hussain](/wiki/Begum_Rokeya) and [Faizunnessa Chowdhurani](/wiki/Nawab_Faizunnesa) played an important role in emancipating Bengali Muslim women from the [purdah](/wiki/Purdah) in undivided Bengal and promoting girls' education. Several women were elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in the British Raj. The first women's magazine *Begum* was published in 1948. Women played an important role in Bengali [civil society](/wiki/Civil_society) in [East Pakistan](/wiki/East_Pakistan).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Female workforce participation in Bangladesh is among the highest in the [Muslim world](/wiki/Muslim_world), at 59%.[[277]](#cite_note-277)