Bangladesh (ˌbæŋɡəˈdɛʃ, ,baːnɡ-; Bengali: বাংলাদেশ, lit. “The country of Bengal”), officially the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (প্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ, Gônoprojatontri Bangladesh), is a country in South Asia. While it is the 92nd-largest country, spanning 147,570 square kilometers (56,980 sq. mi), with a population nearing 163 million, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Bangladesh shares land borders with India to the west, north and the east and Myanmar to the east, whereas the Bay of Bengal lies to its south. Dhaka, its capital and largest city, is also the economic, political and the cultural hub of the country. Chittagong, the largest sea port, is the second largest city. The country’s geography is dominated by the Ganges delta which empties into the Bay of Bengal the combined waters of several river systems, including those of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. As a result, the country is crisscrossed by numerous rivers and inland water ways. The country also features the longest natural sea beach and most of the largest mangrove forest in the world. The country’s biodiversity includes a vast array of plants and wildlife, including the rare Bengal tiger, the national animal.

Bangladesh forms the largest and eastern part of the Bengal region. According to the ancient Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabhurata*, the Vanga Kingdom, one of the namesakes of the Bengal region, was known as an ally of the legendary Ayodhya and was notable for its strong navy. In the ancient and classical period of the Indian subcontinent, the territory of Bangladesh was home to many principalities, including the Pundra, the Gangaridhi, Gauda, Samatata and Harikela. It was also a Mauryan province under the reign of Ashoka. The principalities were notable for their overseas trade, their contacts with the Roman world, the export of fine muslin and silk to the Middle East, and spreading of philosophy and art to Southeast Asia. The Pala Empire, the Chandra dynasty and the Sena dynasty were the last pre-Islamic Bengali middle kingdoms. Islam was introduced during the Pala Empire, through trade with the Abbasid Caliphate, but following the early conquest of Bakhtiyar Khalji and the subsequent establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and preaching of Shah Jalal in East Bengal, it fully spread across the entire region. Later, it was absorbed into the Mughal Empire in 1576, although part of the region was overrun by the Suri Empire. Following the decline of the Mughal Empire in the early 1700s, Bengal became a semi-independent state under the Nawabs of Bengal, ultimately led by Siraj ud-Daulah. It was later conquered by the British East India Company at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The borders of modern Bangladesh were established with the separation of Bengal and India in August 1947, when the region became East Pakistan as a part of the newly formed State of Pakistan following the Boundary of the Partition of India. Later the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self-determination movement led to the Liberation War and eventually resulted in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign in 1971.

Bengalis, 98% of the Bangladeshis speak the official Bengali language. The politically dominant Bengali Muslims make the nation the world’s fourth largest Muslim-majority country. The country is divided into eight administrative divisions and sixty-four districts. It is one of the emerging and growth-leading economies of the world, and is listed among the Next Eleven countries. It has one of the fastest real GDP growth rates in the world. Its gross domestic product ranks 39th largest in the world in terms of market exchange rates and 29th in purchasing power parity. Its per capita income ranks 143th and 136th in two measures. While in the recent years Bangladesh has registered notable success in using Microcredit as a tool for poverty alleviation, women
empowerment, generation of income through export of RMG, population control, reducing child mortality and combating natural disasters.

Modern Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation in 1971 after breaking away and achieving independence from Pakistan in the Bangladesh Liberation War. The country's borders corresponded with the major portion of the ancient and historic region of Bengal in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent, where civilization dates back over four millennia, to the Chalcolithic. The history of the region is closely intertwined with the history of Bengal and the broader history of the Indian subcontinent.

Bangladesh's early documented history featured successions of Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms and empires, vying for regional dominance.

Islam arrived during the 6th-7th century AD and became dominant gradually since the early 13th century with the advent of Muslim rulers. From the 14th century onward, it was ruled by the Bengal Sultanate, beginning a period of the country's economic prosperity and military dominance over the regional empires, which was referred by the Europeans to as the richest country to trade with. Afterwards, the region came under the Mughal Empire, as its wealthiest province. Bengal Subah generated almost half of the empire's GDP and 12% of the world's GDP, larger than the entirety of western Europe, ushering in the period of proto-industrialization.

The borders of modern Bangladesh were established with the separation of Bengal and India in August 1947, when the region became East Pakistan as a part of the newly formed State of Pakistan following the Boundary of the Partition of India. However, it was separated from West Pakistan by 1,600 km (994 mi) of Indian territory.

The Bangladesh Liberation War (Bengali: মুক্তিযুদ্ধ Muktijuddho), also known as the Bangladesh War of Independence, or simply the Liberation War in Bangladesh, was a revolution and armed conflict sparked by the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self-determination movement in what was then East Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladesh genocide. It resulted in the independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. After independence, the new state endured famine, natural disasters, and widespread poverty, as well as political turmoil and military coups. The restoration of democracy in 1991 has been followed by relative calm and rapid economic progress. Bangladesh is today a major manufacturer in the global textile industry.

Geography

The geography of Bangladesh is divided between three regions. Most of the country is dominated by the fertile Ganges-Brahmaputra delta, the largest delta in the world. The northwest and central parts of the country are formed by the Madhupur and the Barind plateaus. The northeast and southeast are home to evergreen hill ranges.

The Ganges delta is formed by the confluence of the Ganges (local name Padma or Pôdda), Brahmaputra (Jamuna or Jamuna), and Meghna rivers and their respective tributaries. The Ganges unites with the Jamuna (main channel of the Brahmaputra) and later joins the Meghna, finally flowing into the Bay of Bengal.

Bangladesh is predominantly rich fertile flat land. Most of it is less than 12 m (39.4 ft.) above sea level, and it is estimated that about 10% of its land would be flooded if the sea level were to rise by 1 m (3.28 ft.). 17% of the country is covered by forests and 12% is covered by hill systems. The country's haor wetlands are of significance to global environmental science.

In southeastern Bangladesh, experiments have been done since the 1960s to 'build with nature'. Construction of cross dams has induced a natural accretion of silt, creating new land. With Dutch funding, the Bangladeshi government began promoting the development of this new land in the late 1970s. The effort has become a multi-agency endeavor, building roads, culverts, embankments, cyclone shelters, toilets and ponds, as well as distributing land to settlers. It was expected that by fall 2010, the program would have allotted some 27,000 acres (10,927 ha) to 21,000 families. With an elevation of 1,064 m (3,491 ft.), the highest peak of Bangladesh is Saka Haphong, near the border with Myanmar.
Administrative geography

Bangladesh is divided into eight administrative divisions, each named after their respective divisional headquarters: Barisal, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rangpur, and Sylhet.

Divisions are subdivided into districts (zila). There are 64 districts in Bangladesh, each further subdivided into upazila (subdistricts) or thana. The area within each police station, except for those in metropolitan areas, is divided into several unions, with each union consisting of multiple villages. In the metropolitan areas, police stations are divided into wards, which are further divided into mahallas.

There are no elected officials at the divisional or district levels, and the administration is composed only of government officials. Direct elections are held in each union (or ward) for a chairperson and a number of members. In 1997, a parliamentary act was passed to reserve three seats (out of 12) in every union for female candidates.

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### Administrative Divisions of Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Established</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Density</th>
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<td>12,596</td>
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### Climate

Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon climate characterized by wide seasonal variations in rainfall, high temperatures, and high humidity. Regional climatic differences in this flat country are minor. Three seasons are generally recognized: a hot, muggy summer from March to June; a hot, humid and rainy monsoon season from June to November; and a warm-hot, dry winter from December to February. In general, maximum summer temperatures range between 38 and 41 °C (100.4 and 105.8 °F). April is the hottest month in most parts of the country. January is the coolest month, when the average temperature for most of the country is 16–20 °C (61–68 °F) during the day and around 10 °C (50 °F) at night.

Winds are mostly from the north and northwest in the winter, blowing gently at 1 to 3 km/h (0.6 to 1.9 mph) in northern and central areas and 3 to 6 km/h (1.9 to 3.7 mph) near the coast. From March to May, violent
thunderstorms, called northwesterns by local English speakers, produce winds of up to 60 km/h (37.3 mph). During the intense storms of the early summer and late monsoon season, southerly winds of more than 160 km/h (99.4 mph) cause waves to crest as high as 6 meters (19.7 ft.) in the Bay of Bengal.

Biodiversity
Bangladesh ratified the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity on 3 May 1994. As of 2014, the country was set to revise its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Bangladesh is located in the Indomalaya ecozone. Its ecology includes a long sea coastline, numerous rivers and tributaries, lakes, wetlands, evergreen forests, semi evergreen forests, hill forests, moist deciduous forests, freshwater swamp forests and flat land with tall grass. The country is dominated by lush vegetation, with villages often buried in groves of mango, jackfruit, bamboo, betel nut, coconut and date palm. The country has up to 6000 species of plant life, including 5000 flowering plants. Water bodies and wetland systems provide a habitat for many aquatic plants. Water lilies and lotuses grow vividly during the monsoon season. The country has 50 wildlife sanctuaries.

Bangladesh is home to much of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, covering an area of 6,000 km2 in the southwest littoral region. The forest is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The northeastern Sylhet region is home to haor wetlands, which is a unique ecosystem. The southeastern Chittagong region covers evergreen and semi evergreen hilly jungles. Central Bangladesh includes the plain land Sal forest running along the districts of Gazipur, Tangail and Mymensingh. St. Martin's Island is the only coral reef in the country.

Bangladesh has an abundance of wildlife in its forests, marshes, woodlands and hills. The vast majority of animals' dwell within a habitat of 150,000 km2. The Bengal tiger, clouded leopard, saltwater crocodile, black panther and fishing cat are among the chief predators in the Sundarbans. Northern and eastern Bangladesh is home to the Asian elephant, hoolock gibbon, Asian black bear and oriental pied hornbill.

The Chital deer are widely seen in southwestern woodlands. Other animals include the black giant squirrel, capped langur, Bengal fox, sambar deer, jungle cat, king cobra, wild boar, mongooses, pangolins, pythons and water monitors. Bangladesh has one of the largest population of Irrawaddy dolphins and Ganges dolphins. A 2009 census found 6,000 Irrawaddy dolphins inhabiting the littoral rivers of Bangladesh. The country has numerous species of amphibians (53), reptiles (139), marine reptiles (19) and marine mammals (5). It also has 628 species of birds.

The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act was enacted in 1995. The government has designated several regions as Ecologically Critical Areas, including wetlands, forests and rivers. The Sundarbans tiger project and the Bangladesh Bear Project are among the key initiatives to strengthen conservation.

Politics and government

Politics of Bangladesh takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Bangladesh is the head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. The Constitution of Bangladesh was written in 1972 and has undergone sixteen amendments. The Economist Intelligence Unit has rated Bangladesh as "hybrid regime" in 2016.

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

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

**Legal system**
Bangladesh is part of the common law jurisdiction. It is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The legal system of Bangladesh has its roots in the laws of British India. Since independence in 1971, statutory law enacted by the Parliament of Bangladesh has been the primary form of legislation. Judge made law continues to be significant in areas such as constitutional law. Unlike in other common law countries, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh has the power to not only interpret laws made by the parliament, but to also declare them null and void and to enforce fundamental rights of the citizens. The Bangladesh Code includes a compilation of all laws since 1836. The vast majority of Bangladeshi laws are in English. But most laws adopted after 1987 are in Bengali. Family law is intertwined with religious law. Bangladesh has significant international law obligations.

**Military**
The Bangladesh Armed Forces have inherited the institutional framework of the British military and the British Indian Army. It was formed in 1971 from the military regiments of East Pakistan. In 2012 the army strength was around 300,000, including reservists, the Air Force (22,000) and the Navy (24,000). In addition to traditional defense roles, the military has supported civil authorities in disaster relief and provided internal security during periods of political unrest. For many years, Bangladesh has been the world's largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces. In February 2015, the country made major deployments to Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Golan Heights, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia and South Sudan.

**Foreign relations**
The foreign relations share the Bangladeshi government's policies in its external relations with the international community. The country pursues a moderate foreign policy that places heavy reliance on multinational diplomacy, especially at the United Nations and World Trade Organization (WTO). Since independence in 1971, the country has stressed its principle of "Friendship towards all, malice towards none" in dictating its diplomacy. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bangladesh has tended to not take sides with major powers. Since the end of the Cold War, the country has pursued better relations with regional neighbors.

Inspired by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's vision for a Switzerland of the East, the Bangladesh government has begun to translate the ideal into a foreign policy that pursues regional economic integration in South Asia and aims to establish Bangladesh as a regional hub of transit trade in Asia.

**Human rights**
Human rights in Bangladesh are enshrined as fundamental rights in Part III of the Constitution of Bangladesh. However, constitutional and legal experts believe many of the country's laws require reform to enforce fundamental rights and reflect democratic values of the 21st century. Proposed reforms include strengthening
parliamentary supremacy, judicial independence, the separation of powers, repealing laws which restrain freedom of the press and disbanding security agencies which violate civil liberties.

Even though Bangladesh has Islam as its state religion and has constitutional references to Hindus, Christians and Buddhists; the political system is modeled as a secular democracy. Governments have generally respected freedom of religion, a cornerstone of the Bangladeshi constitution. However, police have been slow in responding to and investigating attacks against minorities, opposition activist & Supporter in fact Police brutally suppress any rightful protest against Government, according to Human Right watch around five hundred people have been disappeared since last ten years. In southeastern Bangladesh, the Chittagong Hill Tracts remains a militarized region due to a historical insurgency. Tribal people in Bangladesh have demanded constitutional recognition.

Economy

Bangladesh has the world’s 39th largest economy in terms of market exchange rates and 29th largest in terms of purchasing power parity, which ranks second in South Asia after India. Bangladesh is also one of the world’s fastest-growing economies and one of the fastest growing middle-income countries. The country has a market-based mixed economy. A developing nation, Bangladesh is one of the Next Eleven emerging markets. According to the IMF, its per-capita income was US$1,888 in 2018, with a GDP of $314 billion. Bangladesh has the second-highest foreign-exchange reserves in South Asia (after India). The Bangladeshi diaspora contributed $15.31 billion in remittances in 2015. Bangladesh’s largest trading partners are the European Union, the United States, Japan, India, Australia, China and ASEAN. Expat workers in the Middle East and Southeast Asia send back a large chunk of remittances. The economy is driven by strong domestic demand.

Transport

Transport is a major sector of the economy. Aviation has grown rapidly, and includes the flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines and other privately owned airlines. Bangladesh has a number of airports: three international and several domestic and STOL (short takeoff and landing) airports. The busiest, Shahjalal International Airport connects Dhaka with major destinations.

Bangladesh has a 2,706-kilometre (1,681-mile) rail network operated by state-owned Bangladesh Railway. The total length of the country’s road and highway network is nearly 21,000-kilometre (13,000-mile).

It has one of the largest inland waterway networks in the world, with 8,046 kilometers (5,000 miles) of navigable waters. The southeastern port of Chittagong is its busiest seaport, handling over $60 billion in annual trade (more than 80 percent of the country’s export-import commerce). The second-busiest seaport is Mongla. Bangladesh has three seaports and 22 river ports.

Energy and infrastructure

Bangladesh had an installed electrical capacity of 10,289 MW in January 2014. About 56 percent of the country’s commercial energy is generated by natural gas, followed by oil, hydropower and coal. Bangladesh has planned to import hydropower from Bhutan and Nepal. Nuclear energy is being developed with Russian support in the Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant project. The country ranks fifth worldwide in the number of renewable energy green jobs, and solar panels are increasingly used to power urban and off-grid rural areas.

Science and technology

Bangladesh's space agency, SPARRSO, was founded in 1983 with assistance from the United States. The country's first communications satellite, Bangabandhu-1, was launched from the United States in 2018. The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission operates a TRIGA research reactor at its atomic-energy facility in Savar. In 2015, Bangladesh was ranked the 26th global IT outsourcing destination.

Tourism
Bangladesh's tourist attractions include historical and monuments, resorts, beaches, picnic spots, forests and tribal people, wildlife of various species. Activities for tourists include angling, water skiing, river cruising, hiking, rowing, yachting, and sea bathing.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported in 2013 that the travel and tourism industry in Bangladesh directly generated 1,281,500 jobs in 2012 or 1.8 percent of the country's total employment, which ranked Bangladesh 157 out of 178 countries worldwide. Direct and indirect employment in the industry totaled 2,714,500 jobs, or 3.7 percent of the country's total employment. The WTTC predicted that by 2023, travel and tourism will directly generate 1,785,000 jobs and support an overall total of 3,891,000 jobs, or 4.2 percent of the country's total employment. This would represent an annual growth rate in direct jobs of 2.9 percent. Domestic spending generated 97.7 percent of direct travel and tourism gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012. Bangladesh's world ranking in 2012 for travel and tourism's direct contribution to GDP, as a percentage of GDP, was 142 out of 176.

Demographics

Estimates of the Bangladeshi population vary, but UN data suggests 162,951,560 (162.9 million). The 2011 census estimated 142.3 million, much less than 2007–2010 estimates of Bangladesh's population (150–170 million). Bangladesh is the world's eighth-most-populous nation. In 1951, its population was 44 million. Bangladesh is the most densely-populated large country in the world, ranking 7th in population density when small countries and city-states are included.

Bangladesh's total fertility rate is now 2.05 lower than India's (2.58) and Pakistan's (3.07). The population is relatively young, with 34 percent aged 15 or younger and five percent 65 or older. Life expectancy at birth was estimated at 72.49 years in 2016. According to the World Bank, as of 2016 14.8% of the country lives below the international poverty line on less than $1.90 per day.

The Adivasi population includes the Chakma, Marma, Tanchangya, Tripuri, Kuki, Khiang, Khumi, Murang, Mru, Chak, Lushei, Bawm, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Khasi, Jaintia, Garo, Santal, Munda and Oraon tribes. The Chittagong Hill Tracts region experienced unrest and an insurgency from 1975 to 1997 in an autonomy movement by its indigenous people. Although a peace accord was signed in 1997, the region remains militarized.

Bangladesh is home to a significant Ismaili community. It hosts many Urdu-speaking immigrants, who migrated there after the partition of India. Stranded Pakistanis were given citizenship by the Supreme Court in 2008.

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh number at around 1 million, making Bangladesh one of the countries with the largest refugee populations in the world.

Languages of Bangladesh
The national language, Bangla, is the only official language of Bangladesh according to the third article of the Constitution of Bangladesh.
More than 98 percent of people in Bangladesh speak Bengali as their native language. Dialects of Bengali are spoken in some parts of the country, which include non-standard dialects (sometimes viewed as separate languages) such as Chatgaiya, Sylheti and Rangpuri. Bengali Language Implementation Act, 1987 made it mandatory to use Bengali in all government affairs in Bangladesh. Although laws were historically written in English, they were not translated into Bengali until the Bengali Language Implementation Act of 1987. All subsequent acts, ordinances and laws have been promulgated in Bengali since 1987. English is often used in the verdicts delivered by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, and is also used in higher education.

The Chakma language is another native Eastern Indo-Aryan language of Bangladesh. It is written using the Chakma script. The unique aspect of the language is that it is used by the Chakma people, who are a population with similarities to the people of East Asia, rather than the Indian subcontinent. The Chakma language is endangered due to its decreasing use in schools and institutions.

Other tribal languages include Garo, Manipuri, Kokborok and Rakhine. Among the Austroasiatic languages, the Santali language is spoken by the Santali tribe. Many of these languages are written in the Bengali script; while there is also some usage of the Latin script.

Urdu has a significant heritage in Bangladesh. The language was introduced to Bengal in the 17th-century. Traders from North India often spoke the language in Bengal, as did sections of the Bengali upper class. Urdu poets lived in many parts of Bangladesh. The use of Urdu became controversial during the Bengali Language Movement, when the people of East Bengal resisted attempts to impose Urdu as the main official language. In modern Bangladesh, the Urdu-speaking community is today restricted to the country’s Bihari community (formerly Stranded Pakistanis); and some sections of the non-Bengali upper class. The University of Dhaka operates a Department of Urdu.

Religion
Islam is the largest and the official state religion of Bangladesh, followed by 90 percent of the population. Most Bangladeshis are Bengali Muslims, who form the largest Muslim ethnoreligious group in South Asia and the second largest in the world after the Arabs. There is also a minority of non-Bengali Muslims. The vast majority of Bangladeshi Muslims are Sunni, followed by minorities of Shia and Ahmadiya. Bangladesh has the fourth-largest Muslim population in the world, and is the third-largest Muslim-majority country (after Indonesia and Pakistan). Sufism has an extensive heritage in the region. The largest gathering of Muslims in Bangladesh is the apolitical Bishwa Ijtema, held annually by the orthodox Tablighi Jamaat. The Ijtema is the second-largest Muslim congregation in the world, after the Hajj. The Islamic Foundation is an autonomous government agency responsible for some Muslim religious matters.

Hinduism is followed by 9.5 percent of the population; most are Bengali Hindus, and some are members of ethnic minority groups. Bangladeshi Hindus are the country’s second-largest religious group and the third-largest Hindu community in the world.

Buddhism is the third-largest religion, at 0.6 percent. Bangladeshi Buddhists are concentrated among ethnic groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (particularly the Chakma, Marma and Tanchangya peoples), and coastal Chittagong is home to a large number of Bengali Buddhists. While the Mahayana school of Buddhism was historically prevalent in the region.

Christianity is the fourth-largest religion, at 0.4 percent. Roman Catholicism is the largest denomination among Bangladeshi Christians. Bengali Christians are spread across the country.
The Constitution of Bangladesh declares Islam the state religion, but bans religion-based politics. It proclaims equal recognition of Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and people of all faiths. In 1972, Bangladesh was South Asia’s first constitutionally-secular country. Article 12 of the constitution continues to call for secularism, the elimination of interfaith tensions and prohibits the abuse of religion for political purposes and any discrimination against, or persecution of, persons practicing a particular religion. Article 41 of the constitution subject’s religious freedom to public order, law and morality; it gives every citizen the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion.

Education
Bangladesh has a literacy rate of 72.9 percent as of 2018. 75.7% percent for males and 70.09% percent for females. The country's educational system is three-tiered and heavily subsidized, with the government operating many schools at the primary, secondary and higher-secondary levels and subsidizing many private schools. In the tertiary-education sector, the Bangladeshi government funds over 15 state universities through the University Grants Commission.

The education system is divided into five levels: primary (first to fifth grade), junior secondary (sixth to eighth grade), secondary (ninth and tenth grade), higher secondary (11th and 12th grade) and tertiary. Five years of secondary education end with a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two years of secondary education, culminating in the SSC examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two years of higher-secondary education, culminating in the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examination. Education is primarily in Bengali, but English is commonly taught and used. Many Muslim families send their children to part-time courses or full-time religious education in Bengali and Arabic in madrasas.

Bangladesh conforms with the Education for All (EFA) objectives, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and international declarations. Article 17 of the Bangladesh Constitution provides that all children between the ages of six and ten years receive a basic education free of charge.

Universities in Bangladesh are of three general types: public (government-owned and -subsidized), private (privately owned universities) and international (operated and funded by international organizations). Bangladesh has 34 public, 64 private and two international universities; Bangladesh National University has the largest enrolment, and the University of Dhaka (established in 1921) is the oldest. University of Chittagong (established in 1966) is the largest University (Campus: Rural, 2,100 acres (8.5 km²)). Islamic University of Technology, is a subsidiary of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC, representing 57 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America). Asian University for Women in Chittagong is the preeminent South Asian liberal-arts university for women, representing 14 Asian countries; its faculty hails from notable academic institutions in North America, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East. BUET, CUET, KUET and RUET are Bangladesh's four public engineering universities. BUTex and DUET are two specialized engineering universities. The NITER is a specialized public-private partnership institute which provides higher education in textile engineering. Science and technology universities include SUST, PUST, JUST and NSTU. Bangladeshi universities are accredited by and affiliated with the University Grants Commission (UGC), created by Presidential Order 10 in 1973.

Medical education is provided by 29 government and private medical colleges. All medical colleges are affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Culture

Visual arts
The recorded history of art in Bangladesh can be traced to the 3rd century BCE, when terracotta sculptures were made in the region. In classical antiquity, a notable school of sculptural Hindu, Jain and Buddhist art developed in the Pala Empire and the Sena dynasty. Islamic art evolved since the 14th century. The architecture of the Bengal Sultanate saw a distinct style of domed mosques with complex niche pillars that had no minarets. Mughal Bengal’s most celebrated artistic tradition was the weaving of Jamdani motifs on fine muslin, which is now classified by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. Jamdani motifs were similar to Iranian textile art (buta motifs) and Western textile art (paisley). The Jamdani weavers in Dhaka received imperial patronage. Ivory and brass were also widely used in Mughal Art. Pottery is widely used in Bangali culture.

The modern art movement in Bangladesh took shape during the 1950s, particularly with the pioneering works of Zainul Abedin. East Bengal developed its own modernist painting and sculpture traditions, which were distinct from the art movements in West Bengal. The Art Institute Dhaka has been an important center for visual art in the region. Its annual Bengali New Year parade was enlisted as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2016.

Modern Bangladesh has produced many of South Asia’s leading painters, including SM Sultan, Mohammad Kibria, Shahabuddin Ahmed, Kanak Champa Chakma, Kaif Ahmed, Saifuddin Ahmed, Qayyum Chowdhury, Rashid Choudhury, Quamrul Hassan, Rafiquin Nabi and Syed Jahangir, among others. Novera Ahmed and Nitun Kundu were the country’s pioneers of modernist sculpture.

Literature
The oldest evidence of writing in Bangladesh is the Mahasthan Brahmi Inscription, which dates back to the 3rd century BCE. In the Gupta Empire, Sanskrit literature thrived in the region. Bengali developed from Sanskrit and Magadhi Prakrit in the form the 8th to 10th century. Bengali literature is a millennium-old tradition; the Charyapadas are the earliest examples of Bengali poetry. Sufi spiritualism inspired many Bengali Muslim writers. During the Bengal Sultanate, medieval Bengali writers were influenced by Arabic and Persian works. The Chandidas are the notable lyric poets from the early Medieval Age. Syed Altaol was a noted secular poet and translator from the Arakan region. The Bengal Renaissance shaped the emergence of modern Bengali literature, including novels, short stories and science fiction. Rabindranath Tagore was the first non-European laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature and is described as the Bengali Shakespeare. Kazi Nazrul Islam was a revolutionary poet who espoused political rebellion against colonialism and fascism. Begum Rokeya is regarded as the pioneer feminist writer of Bangladesh. Other renaissance icons included Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. The writer Syed Mujtaba Ali is noted for his cosmopolitan Bengali worldview. Jasmuddin was a renowned pastoral poet. Shamsur Rahman was the poet laureate of Bangladesh for many years. Al Mahmud is considered one of the greatest Bengali poets to have emerged in the 20th century. Farrukh Ahmed, Sufia Kamal, and Nirmalendu Goon are important figures of modern Bengali poetry. Ahmed Sofa is regarded as the most important Bangladeshi intellectual in the post-independence era. Humayun Ahmed was a popular writer of modern Bangladeshi magical realism and science fiction. Notable writers of Bangladeshi fiction include Mir Mosharraf Hossain, Akhteruzzaman Elias, Syed Waliullah, Shahidul Kaiser, Shawkat Osman, Selina Hossain, Taslima Nasreen, Haripada Datta, Razia Khan, Anisul Hoque, and Bipradash Barua. Many Bangladeshi writers, such as Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, and Farah Ghuznavi are acclaimed for their short stories.

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

Women in Bangladesh
The status of women in Bangladesh has been subject to many important changes over the past few centuries. The Bangladeshi women have made significant progress since the country gained its independence in 1971. The past four decades have seen increased political empowerment for women, better job prospects, increased opportunities of education and the adoption of new laws to protect their rights though Bangladesh's policies regarding women's rights is influenced by patriarchal values. As of 2019, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the Speaker of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition were women. Bangladesh has also not elected a male as Prime Minister since 1988.

Bengal has a long history of feminist activism dating back to the 19th century. Begum Rokeya and Faizunnessa Chowdhurani played an important role in emancipating Bengali Muslim women from purdah, prior to the country's division, as well as...
promoting girls' education. Several women were elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in the British Raj. The first women's magazine, Begum, was published in 1948.

In 2008, Bangladeshi female workforce participation stood at 26%. Women dominate blue collar jobs in the Bangladeshi garment industry. Agriculture, social services, healthcare and education are also major occupations for Bangladeshi women, while their employment in white collar positions has steadily increased.

Architecture
The architectural traditions of Bangladesh have a 2,500-year-old heritage. Terracotta architecture is a distinct feature of Bengal. Pre-Islamic Bengali architecture reached its pinnacle in the Pala Empire, when the Pala School of Sculptural Art established grand structures such as the Somapura Mahavihara. Islamic architecture began developing under the Bengal Sultanate, when local terracotta styles influenced medieval mosque construction. The Adina Mosque of United Bengal was the largest mosque built on the Indian subcontinent.

The Sixty Dome Mosque was the largest medieval mosque built in Bangladesh, and is a fine example of Turkic-Bengali architecture. The Mughal style replaced indigenous architecture when Bengal became a province of the Mughal Empire and influenced the development of urban housing. The Kantajew Temple and Dhakeshwari Temple are excellent examples of late medieval Hindu temple architecture. Indo-Saracenic Revival architecture, based on Indo-Islamic styles, flourished during the British period. The zamindar gentry in Bangladesh built numerous Indo-Saracenic palaces and country mansions, such as the Ahsan Manzil, Tajhat Palace, Dighapatia Palace, Puthia Rajbari and Natore Rajbari.

Bengali vernacular architecture is noted for pioneering the bungalow. Bangladeshi villages consist of thatched roofed houses made of natural materials like mud, straw, wood and bamboo. In modern times, village bungalows are increasingly made of tin.

Muzharul Islam was the pioneer of Bangladeshi modern architecture. His varied works set the course of modern architectural practice in the country. Islam brought leading global architects, including Louis Kahn, Richard Neutra, Stanley Tigerman, Paul Rudolph, Robert Boughey and Konstantinos Doxiadis, to work in erstwhile East Pakistan. Louis Kahn was chosen to design the National Parliament Complex in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Kahn's monumental designs, combining regional red brick aesthetics, his own concrete and marble brutalism and the use of lakes to represent Bengali geography, are regarded as one of the masterpieces of the 20th century. In more recent times, award-winning architects like Rafiq Azam have set the course of contemporary architecture by adopting influences from the works of Islam and Kahn.

Performing arts
Theatre in Bangladesh includes various forms with a history dating back to the 4th century CE. It includes narrative forms, song and dance forms, supra-personae forms, performances with scroll paintings, puppet theatre and processional forms. The Jatra is the most popular form of Bengali folk theatre. The dance traditions of Bangladesh include indigenous tribal and Bengali dance forms, as well as classical Indian dances, including the Kathak, Odissi and Manipuri dances.

The music of Bangladesh features the Baul mystical tradition, listed by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Numerous lyric-based musical traditions, varying from one region to the next, exist, including Gombhira, Bhatiali and Bhawaiya. Folk music is accompanied by a one-stringed instrument known as the ektara. Other instruments include the dotara, dhol, flute, and tabla. Bengali classical music includes Tagore songs and Nazrul Sangeet. Bangladesh has a rich tradition of Indian classical music, which uses instruments like the sitar, tabla, sarod and santoor. Musician Ayub Bachchu is credited with popularising Bengali rock music in Bangladesh.

Textiles
The Nakshi Kantha is a centuries-old embroidery tradition for quilts, said to be indigenous to eastern Bengal (i.e. Bangladesh). The sari is the national dress for Bangladeshi women. Mughal Dhaka was renowned for producing the finest Muslim saris, including the famed Dhakai and Jamdani, the weaving of which is listed by UNESCO as one of the masterpieces of humanity’s intangible cultural heritage. Bangladesh also produces the Rajshahi silk. The shalwar kameez is also widely worn by Bangladeshi women. In urban areas some women can be seen in western clothing. The kurta and sherwani are the national
dress of Bangladeshi men; the lungi and dhoti are worn by them in informal settings. Aside from ethnic wear, domestically tailored suits and neckties are customarily worn by the country's men in offices, in schools and at social events.

The handloom industry supplies 60–65% of the country's clothing demand. The Bengali ethnic fashion industry has flourished in the changing environment of the fashion world. The retailer Aarong is one of the most successful ethnic wear brands in South Asia. The development of the Bangladesh textile industry, which supplies leading international brands, has promoted the production and retail of modern Western attire locally, with the country now having a number of expanding local brands like Westecs and Yellow. Bangladesh is the world's second largest garments exporter. Among Bangladesh's fashion designers, Bibi Russell has received international acclaim for her "Fashion for Development" shows.

Cuisine

White rice is the staple of Bangladeshi cuisine, along with many vegetables and lentils. Rice preparations also include Bengali biryanis, pulaos, and khichuris. Mustard sauce, ghee, sunflower oil and fruit chutneys are widely used in Bangladeshi cooking. Fish is the main source of protein in Bengali cuisine. The Hilsa is the national fish and immensely popular across Bangladesh. Other kinds of fish eaten include rohu, butterfish, catfish, tilapia and barramundi. Fish eggs are a gourmet delicacy. Seafood holds an important place in Bengali cuisine, especially lobsters, shrimps and dried fish. Meat consumption includes chicken, beef, mutton, venison, duck and squab. In Chittagong, Mezban feasts are a popular tradition featuring the serving of hot beef curry. In Sylhet, the shatkora lemons are used to marinate dishes. In the tribal Hill Tracts, bamboo shoot cooking is prevalent. Bangladesh has a vast spread of desserts, including distinctive sweets like Rôshogolla, Rôshomalai, Chomchom, Mishti Doi and Kaloyaam. Pithas are traditional boiled desserts made with rice or fruits. Halwa is served during religious festivities. Naan, paratha, luchi and bakarkhani are the main local breads. Black tea is offered to guests as a gesture of welcome. Kebabs are widely popular across Bangladesh, particularly seekh kebabs, chicken tikka and shashliks.

Bangladesh shares its culinary heritage with the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal. The two regions have several differences, however. In Muslim-majority Bangladesh, meat consumption is greater; whereas in Hindu-majority West Bengal, vegetarianism is more prevalent. The Bangladeshi diaspora dominates the South Asian restaurant industry in many Western countries, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Festivals

Pahela Baishakh, the Bengali new year, is the major festival of Bengali culture and sees widespread festivities. Of the major holidays celebrated in Bangladesh, only Pahela Baishakh comes without any preexisting expectations (specific religious identity, culture of gift-giving, etc.). Unlike holidays like Eid al-Fitr, where dressing up in lavish clothes has become a norm, or Christmas where exchanging gifts has become an integral part of the holiday, Pahela Baishakh is really about celebrating the simpler, rural roots of the Bengal. As a result, more people can participate in the festivities together without the burden of having to reveal one's class, religion, or financial capacity. Other cultural festivals include Nabonno, and Poush Parbon both of which are Bengali harvest festivals.

The Muslim festivals of Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Milad un Nabi, Muharram, Chand Raat, Shab-e-Barat; the Hindu festivals of Durga Puja, Janmashtami and Rath Yatra; the Buddhist festival of Buddha Purnima, which marks the birth of Gautama Buddha, and Christian festival of Christmas are national holidays in Bangladesh and see the most widespread celebrations in the country.

Alongside are national days like the remembrance of 21 February 1952 Language Movement Day (International Mother Language Day created by UNESCO in 1999), Independence Day and Victory Day. On Language Movement Day, people congregate at the Shaheed Minar in Dhaka to remember the national heroes of the Bengali Language Movement, and at the National Martyrs’ Memorial on Independence Day and Victory Day to remember the national heroes of the Bangladesh Liberation War. These occasions are observed with public ceremonies, parades, rallies by citizens, political speeches, fairs, concerts, and various other public and private events, celebrating the history and traditions of Bangladesh. TV and radio stations broadcast special programs and patriotic songs, and many schools and colleges organize fairs, festivals, and concerts that draw the participation of citizens from all levels of Bangladeshi society.

Sports

Cricket is one of the most popular sports in Bangladesh, followed by football. The national cricket team participated in their first Cricket World Cup in 1999, and the following year was granted elite Test cricket status. They have however struggled,
recording only ten test match victories: one against Australia, one against England, one against Sri Lanka in Sri Lanka, five against Zimbabwe (one in 2005, one in 2013 in Zimbabwe, and three in 2014), two in a 2–0 series victory over the West Indies in the West Indies in 2009. Six of Bangladesh's ten test match victories came in between the years 2014 to 2017.

Women's sports saw tremendous progress in the 2010s decade in Bangladesh. In 2018 the Bangladesh women's national cricket team the 2018 Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup defeating India women's national cricket team in the final.

Kabaddi—very popular in Bangladesh—is the national game. Other popular sports include field hockey, tennis, badminton, handball, football, chess, shooting, angling. The National Sports Council regulates 42 different sporting federations. On 4 November 2018, Bangladesh national under-15 football team won the 2018 SAFF U-15 Championship, defeating Pakistan national under-15 football team in the final. Bangladesh has five grandmasters in chess. Among them, Niaz Murshed was the first grandmaster in South Asia. In another achievement, Margarita Mamun, a Russian rhythmic gymnast of Bangladeshi origin, was the world champion in 2013 and 2014 before winning the gold medal at the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Media and cinema
The Bangladeshi press is diverse, outspoken and privately owned. Over 200 newspapers are published in the country. Bangladesh Betar is the state-run radio service. The British Broadcasting Corporation operates the popular BBC Bangla news and current affairs service. Bengali broadcasts from Voice of America are also very popular. Bangladesh Television (BTV) is the state-owned television network. There more than 20 privately owned television networks, including several news channels.

The cinema of Bangladesh dates back to 1898, when films began screening at the Crown Theatre in Dhaka. The first bioscope on the subcontinent was established in Dhaka that year. The Dhaka Nawab Family patronised the production of several silent films in the 1920s and 30s. In 1931, the East Bengal Cinematograph Society released the first full-length feature film in Bangladesh, titled the Last Kiss. The first feature film in East Pakistan, Mukh O Mukhosh, was released in 1956. During the 1960s, 25–30 films were produced annually in Dhaka. By the 2000s, Bangladesh produced 80–100 films a year. Zahir Raihan was a prominent documentary-maker who was assassinated in 1971. The late Tareque Masud is regarded as one of Bangladesh's outstanding directors due to his numerous productions on historical and social issues. Masud was honoured by FIPRESCI at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for his film The Clay Bird. Tanvir Mokammel, Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, Humayun Ahmed, Alamgir Kabir, and Chashi Nazrul Islam are some of the prominent directors of Bangladeshi cinema. Bangladesh have very active film society culture. It's started in 1963 at Dhaka. Now around 40 Film Society active in all over Bangladesh. Federation of Film Societies of Bangladesh is the parent organization of the film society movement of Bangladesh. Active film societies include the Rainbow Film Society, Children's Film Society, Moviya Film Society & Dhaka University Film Society.

Museums and libraries
The Varendra Research Museum is the oldest museum in Bangladesh. It houses important collections from both the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, including the sculptures of the Pala-Sena School of Art and the Indus Valley Civilization; as well as Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian manuscripts and inscriptions. The Ahsan Manzil, the former residence of the Nawab of Dhaka, is a national museum housing collections from the British Raj. It was the site of the founding conference of the All India Muslim League and hosted many British Viceroyds in Dhaka.

The Tajhat Palace Museum preserves artefacts of the rich cultural heritage of North Bengal, including Hindu-Buddhist sculptures and Islamic manuscripts. The Mymensingh Museum houses the personal antique collections of Bengali aristocrats in central Bengal. The Ethnological Museum of Chittagong showcases the lifestyle of various tribes in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh National Museum is located in Ramna, Dhaka and has a rich collection of antiquities. The Liberation War Museum documents the Bangladeshi struggle for independence and the 1971 genocide.

In ancient times, manuscripts were written on palm leaves, tree barks, parchment vellum and terracotta plates and preserved at monasteries known as viharas. The Hussain Shahi dynasty established royal libraries during the Bengal Sultanate. Libraries were established in each district of Bengal by the zamindar gentry during the Bengal Renaissance in the 19th century. The trend of establishing libraries continued until the beginning of World War II. In 1854, four major public libraries were opened, including the Bogra Woodburn Library, the Rangpur Public Library, the Jessore Institute Public Library and the Barisal Public Library.
The Northbrook Hall Public Library was established in Dhaka in 1882 in honour of Lord Northbrook, the Governor-General. Other libraries established in the British period included the Victoria Public Library, Natore (1901), the Siraiganj Public Library (1882), the Rajshahi Public Library (1884), the Comilla Birchandra Library (1885), the Shah Makhdum Institute Public Library, Rajshahi (1891), the Noakhali Town Hall Public Library (1896), the Prize Memorial Library, Sylhet (1897), the Chittagong Municipality Public Library (1904) and the Varendra Research Library (1910). The Great Bengal Library Association was formed in 1925. The Central Public Library of Dhaka was established in 1959. The National Library of Bangladesh was established in 1972. The World Literature Center, founded by Ramon Magsaysay Award winner Abdullah Abu Sayeed, is noted for operating numerous mobile libraries across Bangladesh and was awarded the UNESCO Jon Amos Comenius Medal.