

BANGLADESH

Location

South Asia.

Area

144,000 sq km (55,599 sq miles).

Population

153.5 million (2008 estimate).

Population Density

1045 per sq km.

Capital

Dhaka.

Population: 11.9 million (2007).

Government

Republic. Gained independence from Pakistan in 1971.

Language

The official language is Bengali (Bangla). English is widely spoken, especially in government and commercial circles. Tribal dialects are also spoken.

Religion

90% Muslim, 9% Hindus and 1% Buddhist and Christian minorities. Religion is the main influence on attitudes and behavior. Since 1988, Islam has been the official state religion.

Time

GMT + 6.

Electricity

220/240 volts AC, 50Hz. Plugs are of the British 5- and 15-amp, two- or three-pin (round) type

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Head of Government

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since 2009.

Head of State

President Zillur Rahman since 2009.

Telephone

Country code: 880. Public telephone booths are located at the principal marketplaces and in post offices in the main towns.

Mobile Telephone

Coverage is limited to main towns.

Internet

Public Internet services exist in the main towns and there are also a few Internet cafes, usually with slow connections. Some hotels in Dhaka and Chittagong offer Internet access (mainly to guests).

Media

The main broadcast media in Bangladesh, *Radio Bangladesh* and *BTV Bangladesh Television*, the national television channel, are state-owned and favorable to the Government. Little coverage is given to the political opposition, except in the run-up to general elections when a caretaker Government takes control. Although *BTV* remains the country's sole terrestrial TV channel, private satellite-delivered TV stations have established a presence.

The constitution guarantees press freedom, but journalists are subject to regular harassment from the police and political activists. Bangladeshi newspapers are diverse, outspoken and privately owned. English-language titles appeal mainly to the educated urban elite. The authorities sometimes withdraw foreign publications from circulation over articles or images considered malicious or offensive.

Post

Airmail takes three to four days to Europe; surface mail can take several weeks. Post boxes are blue for airmail and red for surface mail. Post offices are closed on Fridays.

Press

- There are eight daily English-language papers, the most popular being the *Bangladesh Observer*, followed by the *Daily Star* and the *New Nation*. The *Independent* is considered to be reasonably unbiased.
- The main English-language weeklies include *Holiday*.
- The main Bengali dailies are *Dainik Ittefaq* and *Dainik Jugantor*.
- Almost all these newspapers are published in Dhaka and circulated throughout the country.

Radio

- *Betar-Radio Bangladesh* is Government-run.
- *Radio Metrowave* is a commercial, music and news station aimed at younger listeners in Dhaka and Chittagong.
- The *BBC World Service* is available on FM in Dhaka.

Note

(a) Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Many restaurants are closed during the day and there are restrictions on smoking and drinking. Some disruption may continue into Eid al-Fitr itself. Eid al-Fitr and Eid ul-Azha may last anything from two to 10 days, depending on the region. (b) Buddhist festivals are declared according to local astronomical observations and it is not possible to forecast the date of their occurrence exactly.

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2010-December 2011 period.

- 1 Jan** *New Year's Day.*
- 21 Feb** *International Mother Language Day.*
- 26 Feb** *Eid-e-Milad-un Nabi (Birth of the Prophet).*
- 26 Mar** *Independence Day.*
- 14 Apr** *Bangla New Year.*
- 1 May** *Labor Day.*
- 27 May** *Buddha Purnima.*
- 9 Jul** *Shab-e Barat (Ascension of the Prophet).*
- 2 Oct** *Durga Puja (Dashami).*
- 20 Oct** *Shab e-Qadr (Evening of Destiny).*
- 10 Sep** *Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan).*
- 7 Nov** *National Revolution Day.*
- 17 Nov** *Eid ul-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice).*
- 16 Dec** *Victory Day (Bijoy Dibosh).*
- 29 Dec** *Islamic New Year.*
- 1 Jan** *New Year's Day.*
- 21 Feb** *International Mother Language Day.*
- 15 Feb** *Eid-e-Milad-un Nabi (Birth of the Prophet).*
- 26 Mar** *Independence Day.*
- 15 Apr** *Bangla New Year.*
- 1 May** *Labor Day.*

17 May *Buddha Purnima.*

28 Jun *Shab-e Barat (Ascension of the Prophet).*

30 Aug

31 Aug *Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan).*

2 Oct *Durga Puja (Dashami).*

20 Oct *Shab e-Qadr (Evening of Destiny).*

7 Nov *National Revolution Day.*

6 Nov

7 Nov *Eid ul-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice).*

16 Dec *Victory Day (Bijoy Dibosh).*

26 Nov *Islamic New Year.*