

Returning to Bangladesh

Country Profile

Bangladesh was formerly part of Pakistan, becoming independent in 1971 after a war including India.

It is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with a population of 161,083,804.

Poverty is widespread across the country however there has been improvement in health and education in recent years.



Agriculture is the main area of employment.

Much of the country is low-lying and the country has suffered significantly due to flooding in recent decades.

The country is trying to develop the industrial, manufacturing and energy sector. Over 1000 were killed in 2013 when a garment factory collapsed. As a result, many workers protested for better working conditions.

Ethnic Groups: Bengali 98%, other 2% (includes tribal groups, non-Bengali Muslims) (1998)

Major languages: Bangla (official, also known as Bengali) spoken by approximately 98% of the population, including regional dialects like Sylheti, Chittagonian, Noakhali etc and English.

Major religion: Islam 85%, Hinduism 9.6%, Others 0.4% Currency: Taka (£1 = 118.50 Taka)

Recent History

In 1971, Bangladesh was established after Awami League leaders proclaimed independence of what was the province of East Pakistan.

In 1974 severe floods destroyed much of the grain crop, leading to an estimated 28,000 deaths. In 1988 Islam became the state religion.

In 1988, floods caused tens of millions of people to become homeless. Ten years later, in 1998, another series of floods recorded as the worst in history, devastate two thirds of the country.

In 1996, two sets of elections see the Awami League win power, with Sheikh Hasina Wajed, daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, becoming prime minister.

In 2000 Sheikh Hasina criticises military regimes in a UN speech, prompting Pakistani leader General Musharrafto to cancel talks with her.

In 2000, Bangladesh expels a Pakistani diplomat for comments on the 1971 war, in which he had stated the number of dead were 26,000 whereas Bangladesh claim nearly 3 million were killed.

In 2002 the government introduces a new law that makes acid attacks punishable by death after rising anger over increasing violence against women.

In 2008 local elections take place which are regarded as a significant step towards restoring democracy.

Over the last two decades, with the help of international development assistance, Bangladesh has made great progress in food security.

Bangladesh is still in the process of trying the alleged perpetrators for war crimes/ crimes against humanity committed during the 9 months long war of independence in 1971.

National Documentation

Passport

A passport is required for travelling abroad. Travel Permit/Documents are issued to Bangladeshi nationals who for some reason are not in possession of their Bangladeshi Passport and want to return to Bangladesh.

Contact:

Bangladeshi High Commission 28 Queens Gate, London SW7 5JA Tel: 020 7584 0081
Email: info@bhclondon.org.uk

Voter ID/National Identification Number

Contact

Block-5/6, Election Commission Secretariat, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207,
Bangladesh

Fax: 880-2-8119819, 8113156, 8129325, 9129033

Email: becs.info@gmail.com

www.ecs.gov.bd

Taxpayers Identification Number (TIN)

A Taxpayers identification number or TIN can be obtained from the office of the National Bureau of Revenue, Government of Bangladesh.

Travelling to Bangladesh

Besides a passport, there are a number of alternative acceptable travel documents which you may use when you return to Bangladesh. This includes your birth certificate, an I.D card, or one of the above national documentations. It is also possible to travel using an expired passport if you have notified the Bangladeshi Embassy before you travel. You may request your birth certificate from the Bangladeshi Embassy if you do not have it with you.

Upon Arrival

Many returning to Bangladesh have highlighted the importance of family and friends in providing support with the transition, including providing accommodation and assistance in settling in. Therefore it is recommended that before your return, you make contact with any relatives or friends that may be able to assist you in settling in.

International Organization for Migration in Bangladesh

Before you travel, you should make contact with the International Organization for Migration in Bangladesh who will be able to offer assistance in organising airport pick-up, assistance in finding accommodation and other services in assisting your reintegration.

If you arrive in Bangladesh without a place to stay, the following places may be able to offer you short-term accommodation, either free of charge or for a small fee. If they are unable to provide accommodation directly, they may also be able to offer support in finding alternative accommodation.

CITY	ORGANISATION	SERVICES
Dhaka	International Organization for Migration Bangladesh House 13A, Road, 136 Gulshan-1 Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh Tel: 9887978, 9887980, 9889765	Assistance in locating local reintegration services.
Dhaka	Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) 542, Mridha Plaza, South Dania, Dhaka-1236, Bangladesh Tel: +88 02 7553737 Cell: +88 01819 224308 Helpline: +88 01842 773300; Fax: +88 02 7553737 Email: okup.ent@gmail.com	Pre-departure information, post-arrival intervention and counselling for vulnerable migrants and refugees in cooperation with local organizations in destination countries. They also assist in return/repatriation and social reintegration through airport pick-ups, providing shelter, psychological counselling and legal and medical assistance. They facilitate economic reintegration through the investment of remittances for business venture and provide vocational training. OKUP empowers migrants, refugees and their families/communities through unity, capacity building and leadership.

Housing and accommodation

Overview

The country is facing a shortage of affordable housing both in the urban and rural areas. Access to shelter or housing is difficult for the low and middle income groups of people and it is extremely acute for the poor.

The government in Bangladesh also do not consider themselves responsible for the construction of housing; this is left to NGOs and the private sector. However, those

with higher and medium earnings are prioritised by private sector construction companies, leaving many people unable to afford their own homes.

Transport

Overview

Transport in Bangladesh is an important part of the nation's economy. Since the liberation of the country, the development of infrastructure within the country has progressed at a rapid pace, and today there is a wide variety of modes of transport. However, there is significant progress still to be made to ensure uniform access to all available transport.

Rickshaws

Dhaka is known as the rickshaw capital of the world and rickshaws are the traditional method of transportation in Bangladesh. Beside rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, regular taxicabs, easy bikes, air conditioned buses, trains and airplanes are used when travelling within Bangladesh.

Trains

Inter-city trains and luxury air conditioned buses go to all major destinations within Bangladesh.

Airports

There are three international airports, located in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet, and a number of domestic and private airports in Bangladesh.

Boats

As Bangladesh is a riverine country, boats and ferries also play an important role in the transportation system of Bangladesh. A ferry in Bangladesh is called a 'launch'. One can go to Khulna, Barisal, Patuakhali, Chandpur and most other destinations by launch.

Health Care

Bangladesh has a health system which is dominated by the public sector whilst the private sector is run by local entrepreneurs, different NGOs and international organisations.

In the public sector, The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) is the leading organisation for ensuring the public health of the country. Since independence, Bangladesh has made significant progress in health outcomes and the government has been pursuing a policy of health development that ensures provision of basic services to the entire population, particularly to the under-served population in rural areas. However there is still vast poverty in the country and insufficient access

to healthcare remains a problem.

NGOs play a significant role in growing sources of health, nutrition and population (HNP) services in both rural and urban Bangladesh. Their services have mainly been in the areas of family planning and Medical College Hospitals (MCH). More recently, NGOs have extended their range of services and are now the major providers of urban primary care.

To achieve the Millenium Development Goals, improvements in some health indicators have been remarkable, especially in reducing fertility, reducing under 5 mortality, providing vaccines to children and mothers, reducing vitamin A deficiency, and others.

There are Specialised Hospitals, Medical College Hospitals, District Hospitals, Upazilla (Sub-District) Hospitals, Union Sub-centers, Community Clinics and Maternity Centers in Bangladesh.

Education for Children

The education system and structure of Bangladesh has three major stages-primary, secondary and higher educations.

Primary education is 5-years while secondary education is 7 years, with three sub-stages: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary.

The tertiary education (3-5 years) is provided through universities (34 public and 60 private universities) and affiliated colleges under supervision of University Grants Commission. Establishment of private universities has gained momentum in recent years.

At all levels, students can choose the medium of education from Bangla or English. According to the article 17 of the Constitution, all the children of Bangladesh are supposed to receive full free education up to secondary level. Secondary and higher secondary schools are affiliated under ten (10) education boards.

There are also Madrasah (religiously inclined) and English medium schools which are enrolled under Madrasah Education Board and Foreign Education Board respectively. Besides this, a Technical Education Board has been established to administer the vocational training schools at post secondary level in Education Board.

There are also many non-profit organizations which operate informal and semi-formal education for underprivileged children under supervision of Bureau of Non-formal Education.

Banking and Finance

To open a bank account in Bangladesh, you will need a number of important documents, though this may vary from bank to bank. Below is the most common information required;

- Two Passport Size Photographs of the Account holder(s) attested by the introducer
- Specimen Signature Card (To be signed by the applicant in front of respective bank personnel),
- Estimated Transaction Profile

and any of the following Identification Documents: Current valid passport

- Valid driving license
- Voter ID Card
- Armed Forces ID card
- A Bangladeshi employer ID card bearing the photograph and signature of the applicant
- A certificate from any local government organs such as Union Council chairman, ward commissioner etc). (In this case the certifier should attest applicant's photograph along with signature
- Trade license with photograph can be accepted for individual's identification), i.e. any document showing photograph, signature and address of the customer issued from a dependable authority (Managers and Supervisors have to apply judgment) are acceptable.
- Tax Identification Number
- One Passport Size Photographs of the Nominee(s) attested by the Account holder.
- All photocopies should be verified with the original and attested by an authorized officer of the Bank.

Employment & Training Opportunities

Government Training Centre
Bureau of Manpower, Employment & Training (BMET)
89/2 Kakrail,
Dhaka 1000
Tel : +880-2-9357972, 9349925

How to Start a New Business

If you wish to start a new business in Bangladesh you will need to register the company name at the Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms. The office is located at: TCB Bhaban (6th Floor),

1, Kawran Bazar,
Dhaka-1215.

This Office accords registration of Companies, Associations and Partnership Firms under the Companies Act, other related acts, rules, orders and ensures lawful administration of them. Both private limited companies and the private limited companies has there own rules. Depending on the type of the business it may also have to obtain license or certificate from BSTI, BRTA, etc.

Law, Customs and Celebrations

Bangladeshi culture is influenced by three main religions- Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

Festivals

Festivals in Bangladesh vary across difference religions.

Muslim rites are Eid-e-Miladunnabi, Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Muharram etc. Hindus observe Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, Kali Puja and many other pujas. Christmas (popularly called Baradin in Bangla) is observed by Christians.

Also there are some common festivities, which are observed countrywide by people irrespective of races. Pahela Baishakh (the first day of Bangla year) is such a festival. National festivals are Independence Day (26th March), 21st February (the Mourning Day and World Mother Language Day), The Victory Day (16th December), Rabindra & Nazrul Jayanti etc.

Literature

Bangalees have a rich literary heritage. The earliest available specimen of Bengali literature is about a thousand years old. The era of modern Bengali Literature began in the late nineteenth century. Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate is a vital part of Bangalee culture. Kazi Nazrul Islam, Michael Madhusudan Datta. Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Mir Mosharraf Hossain and Kazi Ahdul Wadud are the pioneers of modern Bengali Literature.

Dress

Bangladeshi women habitually wear Sarees. Traditionally males wear Panjabis, Fatuas and Pajamas. Hindus wear Dhuty for religious purposes. Now-a-days common dresses of males are shirts and pants.

Charities and Support Services in Bangladesh

ORGANISATION	CONTACT	
BRAC (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement)	75 Mohakhali Dhaka 1212 Bangladesh Tel: +880 2 9881265-72	Pursuing comprehensive pre-Committee) departure, on migration and return services for migrants and their families
Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program	542, Mridha Plaza, South Dania, Dhaka-1236, Bangladesh Tel: +88 02 7553737 Cell: +88 01819 224308	Assist in return/repatriation and social reintegration through airport pick-ups, providing shelter, psychological counseling and legal and medical assistance. They facilitate economic reintegration through the investment of remittances for business venture and provide vocational training. OKUP empowers migrants, refugees and their families/ communities through unity, capacity building and leadership.
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)	YMCA Development Center, 1/1 Pioneer Road, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh	Provides legal advice and representation at all levels of the justice system with an emphasis on providing services to those living in poverty or facing disadvantage or discrimination. Legal services, including mediation, litigation and legal rights training, are provided through BLAST's head office and nineteen unit offices throughout Bangladesh.