

BANGLADESH

Country name in English (PCGN recommended name)	Bangladesh
Country name in Bengali (romanization in brackets)	বাংলাদেশ (Banladesh) ¹
State title in English (PCGN recommended name)	People’s Republic of Bangladesh
State title in Bengali (romanization in brackets)	গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ (Ganaprajatantri Banladesh)
Name of citizen	Bangladeshi
Official languages	Bengali (Bangla) (ben) ^{2 3}
Script	Bengali (Bangla)
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	BD/BGD
Capital	Dhaka
Population	169.356 million ⁴

Introduction

The area now Bangladesh emerged in 1947 as part of the partition of India, which divided the British Indian province of Bengal between India and Pakistan. West Bengal became a province of India, and East Bengal became a province of Pakistan, separated from West Pakistan by around 1000 miles of Indian territory. East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan in 1955, and in December 1971 declared independence from Pakistan and became the independent nation of Bangladesh.

Geographical names policy

Most Bangladeshi toponyms are usually written in the Bengali script but Survey of Bangladesh (SoB) also produces Roman-script maps. Please note that SoB’s Roman-script mapping may not be totally consistent in the spelling of names, therefore it is PCGN policy to use the spellings as found on the most recent SoB Roman-script sources. Names may also be taken from the NGA GEOnet Names Server (GNS)⁵.

The Hunterian System was used by the Survey of India to romanize the geographical names of present-day India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh continues to use the Hunterian System, although the macron (long bar), that was utilised to indicate vowel length, has not been used since the 1980s by SoB and PCGN follows this practice.

¹ Romanization shown according to the Hunterian system (simplified, not showing diacritics denoting retroflex or nasal consonants or long vowels). The strict romanizations according to the Hunterian system would be Bāñlādes̄h and Gaṇaprajātantrī Bāñlādes̄h. This strict romanization is for information only, as the PCGN policy for geographical names in Bangladesh is to use a simplified version of this system, unlikely to use diacritics.

² Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh: <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html>

³ ISO 639-2 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

⁴ UN data, 2023.

⁵ <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

Languages

The official language of Bangladesh is Bengali (called Bangla by its speakers). 98% of Bangladeshis are fluent in Bengali. English is widely spoken and is taught in all schools but its use in government has diminished. Around 38 regional languages are spoken in Bangladesh, including Chittagonian, Sylheti and Rangpuri⁶. The Bengali alphabet is a syllabic alphabet in which all consonants have an inherent vowel (sometimes termed an 'abugida' writing system).

Bangladesh Enclaves

On August 1st 2015, India and Bangladesh exchanged control of 162 small pockets of land on each other's territory (111 in Bangladesh and 51 in India)⁷. The enclaves, home to some 50,000 people, had been created through local peace treaties in the 18th century. Following the exchange, residents chose where they wanted to live and which nationality they would prefer with most of the people living in the enclaves opting to stay where they were, but to change nationality.

Administrative structure

The administrative structure of Bangladesh currently comprises eight divisions (Bengali: *bibhag*) at first-order administrative level (ADM1)⁸: Barishal, Chattogram, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh and Sylhet. Each division is named after the major city within its jurisdiction that serves as the administrative capital of that division. The divisions are subdivided into 64 districts (Bengali: *zila*) at second-order administrative level (ADM2), then into approximately 500 sub-districts (Bengali: *thana* or *upazila*), and finally into unions.

Two new divisions, Meghna and Padma, were approved in 2022, but their creation has been delayed⁹.

On 2nd April 2018, the government of Bangladesh changed the English spellings of two divisions, three districts (and their centres), to reflect their Bengali pronunciation: Chittagong to Chattogram, Barisal to Barishal, Comilla to Cumilla, Jessore to Jashore and Bogra to Bogura¹⁰.

⁶ <https://www.bangladesh.com/culture/languages/>

⁷ India and Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement:

http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/24529_LBA_MEA_Booklet_final.pdf

⁸ <http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/site/view/division-list/List-of-Divisions>

⁹ <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/6b2cxpsrf4>

¹⁰ <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2018/04/02/bangladesh-changes-english-spellings-of-five-districts>

Bangladesh districts



Note that this map is for illustrative purposes. It is not to be taken as necessarily representing the view of the UK Government on boundaries or political status

TOPONYMIC FACT FILE

Administrative divisions

Division (PCGN recommended name)	Location	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre	Districts	Division website
Barishal ¹¹	22° 30' N 90° 20' E	BD-A	Barishal (22° 42' N, 090° 22' E)	Barguna, Barishal, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Patuakhali, Pirojpur	http://www.barisal.gov.bd/
Chattogram ¹²	22° 55' N 91° 30' E	BD-B	Chattogram (22° 20'N, 091° 50'E)	Bandarban, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Chattogram, Cumilla ¹³ , Cox's Bazar ¹⁴ , Feni, Khagrachhari, Lakshmipur, Noakhali, Rangamati	http://www.chittagong.gov.bd/
Dhaka	23° 50' N 90° 15' E	BD-C	Dhaka (23° 43'N, 090° 25'E)	Dhaka, Faridpur, Gazipur, Gopalganj, Kishoreganj, Madaripur, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Rajbari, Shariyatpur ¹⁵ , Tangail	http://www.dhaka.gov.bd/
Khulna	22° 55' N 89° 20' E	BD-D	Khulna (22° 48' N, 089° 33' E)	Bagerhat, Chuadanga, Jashore ¹⁶ , Jhenaidah, Khulna, Kushtia, Magura, Meherpur, Narail, Satkhira	http://www.khulna.gov.bd/

¹¹ The division, district, and the division centre were previously called Barisal.

¹² The division, district, and the division centre were previously called Chittagong.

¹³ The district was previously called Comilla.

¹⁴ Sometimes seen as Coxsbazar.

¹⁵ Sometimes seen as Shariatpur.

¹⁶ The district was previously called Jessore.

TOPONYMIC FACT FILE

Division (PCGN recommended name)	Location	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre	Districts	Division website
Rajshahi	24° 38' N 89° 00' E	BD-E	Rajshahi (24° 22' N, 088° 36' E)	Bogura ¹⁷ , Chapai Nawabganj ¹⁸ , Joypurhat, Naogaon, Natore, Pabna, Rajshahi, Sirajganj	http://www.rajshahi.gov.bd/
Rangpur	25° 50' N 89° 00' E	BD-F	Rangpur (25° 45' N, 089° 15' E)	Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Rangpur, Thakurgaon	http://www.rangpur.gov.bd/
Mymensingh	24° 50' N 90° 25' E	BD-H	Mymensingh (24° 45' N, 090° 24' E)	Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Netrokona ¹⁹ , Sherpur	http://www.mymensingh.gov.bd
Sylhet	24° 40' N 91° 40' E	BD-G	Sylhet (24° 54' N, 91° 52' E)	Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Sylhet	http://www.sylhet.gov.bd/

¹⁷ The district was previously called Bogra.

¹⁸ Sometimes seen as Chapainawabganj.

¹⁹ Sometimes seen as Netrakona.

Useful references

- BBC country profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12650940>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/bangladesh/>
- FCDO travel advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/bangladesh>
- Omniglot: <https://www.omniglot.com/writing/bengali.htm>
- Bangladesh national portal: <https://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/index.php?lang=en>
- Bangladeshi Constitution: <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html>
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.bbs.gov.bd/site/page/29855dc1-f2b4-4dc0-9073-f692361112da/->
- ISO country codes: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:3166:BD>
- Unicode Standard: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Server (GNS): <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

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