

Bangladesh



BANGLADESH

Official Name: People's Republic of Bangladesh

Capital: Dhakka

Area: 55,584 square miles (144,000 kilometers)

Population: 129,195,000

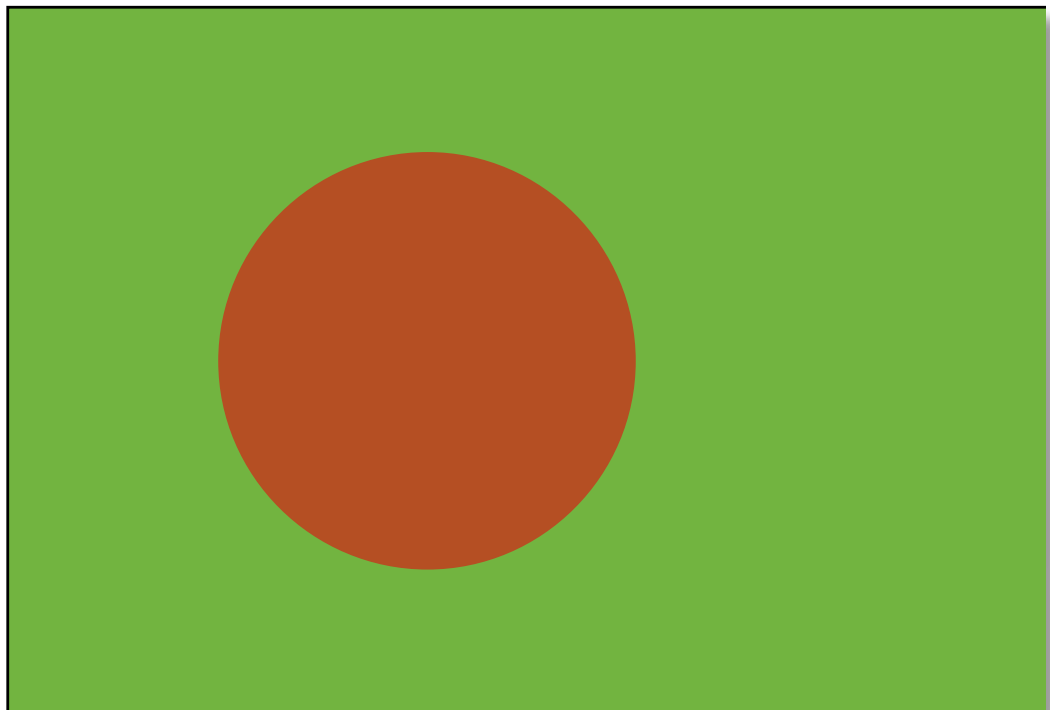
Languages: Bangla

Religions: 88.3% Islam; 10.5% Hindu; 1.2% other

Literacy: Total Population – 43.1% (male-53.9%; female-31%)

Life Expectancy: Male: 60 years; Female: 60 years

Official Exchange Rate: 54.35 taka = \$1



Description:

The flag is bottle green in color with a red circle on the body of the green. The background green color symbolizes the greenery of Bangladesh with its vitality and youthfulness while the red disc represents the rising sun and the sacrifices people to obtain their independence.

National Anthem Of Bangladesh

Amar Sonar Bangla
Amar sonar Bangla,
Ami tomay bhalobashi,
Ciradin tomar akash, tomar batash, amar prany,
O-ma amar prany bajay basi.
Sonar Bangla, Ami tomay bhalobasi.
O-ma, Fagune tor amer bane ghrane pagal kare, mari hay, hay re
O-ma, Fagune tor amer bane ghrane pagal kare,
O-ma, aghrane tor bhara ksete ki dekhechi ami ki dekhechi madhur hasi,
Sonar Bamla ami tomay bhalo basi, ki sobha, ki chaya go ki sneha, ki maya go ki acal
bichayecha bater mule, nadir kule, kule.
Sonar Bangla, Ami tomay bhalobashi
Adopted in 1971 Written by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Translation

My Bengal of Gold, I love you
Your skies and your air set my heart in tune
As if they are a flute
In spring, Motherland of mine,
The fragrance from your mango trees
Makes me wild with joy
What a thrill
In autumn, Motherland of mine
In the full blossomed paddy fields
I have seen sweet smiles spreading all over the place
What a beauty, what shades
What affection and tenderness
What a quilt you have spread at the feet of banyan trees
And along the banks of rivers
Motherland of mine, words from your lips
Are nectar to my ears
If sadness, motherland of mine, casts a shadow on your face
My eyes get filled with tears

Introduction

The Great Brahmaputra River meets the expansive Ganges River Delta in the Bengali heartland, and here the people divide themselves into two main regions: the nation of Bangladesh and the Indian state of West Bengal. It is the largest delta in the world. It is more than twice the size of the Mississippi-Missouri Delta.



Bangladesh means “land of the Bangla speaking people.” *Bangla* is the local language and *Desh* means land. More than 75% of Bangladesh is less than 30 feet (10m) above sea level. Though short on many resources, both areas have water and people in excess. Bangladesh, with nearly 126 million people, is the world’s most densely populated country, while West Bengal, with 70 million, is India’s densest state. The Bengali language ranks sixth in number of speakers.

In 1947, the partition of India split the Bengal Province into Indian and Pakistani sectors. The division followed Islamic religious, not ethnic lines, for all of the people in the area (East Pakistan and West Bengal) speak the Bengali language and consider themselves Bengalis. Eventually, Bangladesh declared its independence and in 1971 became a nation, Bangladesh.

India's West Bengal has always been overwhelmingly Hindu, but Bangladesh, with the largest concentration of Muslims in the world, follows a form of Islam that contains pre-Islamic Hindu and Buddhist elements.

Both sectors share a common history and acknowledge common successes, such as the 19th century revival of literature, music, and the arts. Their shared language Bengali an Indo-European tongue, preserves a rich literary heritage. The works of Rabindranath Tagore, beloved poet and 1913 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, are still read and memorized by Muslims and Hindus alike. Poet and playwright, Kazi Nazrul Islam, “the voice of Bengali nationalism,” grew to become a champion of poor farmers: his plays and tales on political and historical themes gave hope to long-subjugated Muslims.

While many Bengalis live in huge cities such as Dhaka and Chattagong, most of the people are villagers. To the north, they inhabit the hills, but elsewhere Bengalis dwell in a largely watery realm where fishermen, traders, and farmers depend on shallow inlets, fragile islands, and shifting fingers of land. Although the annual summer flooding rejuvenates the countryside with silt (a kind of soil deposit), every few years great floods kill thousands of people.

History

Having won its independence in 1971, Bangladesh is the youngest nation of South Asia.

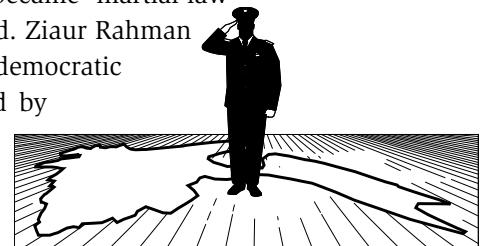
Independence

In December 1971, India attacked Pakistan in support of the Bengali resistance fighters (Mukti Bahini). Within two weeks, the people of East Bengal were free of Pakistani military rule. A government of the nation of Bangladesh was then established, with Mujibur Rahman as prime minister.

Although he was a popular, charismatic leader, Mujibur Rahman did not prove an effective administrator of a new nation facing severe overpopulation, poverty, and frequent natural disasters. In 1974, flooding left millions of people homeless and more than 400,000 dead. The prime minister's increasingly authoritarian rule in the face of such crises led in 1975, to a military coup, in which he and most of his family were killed.

Martial Law

General Ziaur Rahman, army chief of staff, became martial-law administrator in the political turmoil that followed. Ziaur Rahman was well on the way to establishing a popular, democratic government when, in 1981, he was assassinated by some dissident military officers. The power vacuum created by his death led to a dispute over the role of the army in the government. This dispute was resolved in 1982, when General



Hussain Muhammed Ershad, chief of staff of the army, seized the reins of the government.

Ershad wanted to further General Zia's policies of economic development and social reform. At the same time, he reduced the role of the legislature by instituting direct military participation in public affairs in an influential "National Security Advisory Council." This favoritism toward the military caused political unrest among the people and eventually led to his downfall.

Two new leaders, each related to Ershad's more charismatic predecessors, came onto the national scene during the 1986 election campaigns. Begum Khaleda Zia was the widow of General Ziaur Rahman. She became head of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party after her husband's death. Sheikh Hasina Wajed was the sole surviving daughter of Mujibar Rahman, leading the Awami League.

Democracy

National elections were held in February 1991, and Begum Zia's Bangladesh national party (BNP), polling 31% of the votes, won 140 seats in the 300 legislature. The Awami League, the rival political party, although gaining almost the same percentage of votes, came in a distant second in the Legislature, with 84 seats.

A national referendum in September 1991, supported by both the Bangladesh National party (BNP) and the Awami League, voted to reduce the power of the president by placing the executive power in the hands of the prime minister of the National Legislature. Begum Zia then stepped down as president to become the prime minister of the new government.

New elections were held in June 1996, in which the Bangladesh National Party standing was reduced from 140 to 116 seats. With the support of the 18 seats won by General Ershad's Jatiya Party, Begum Sheikh Hasina garnered the votes needed to become prime minister.

The Legislature enacted an important initiative for women in government in September 1997. Out of the directly elected seats in every local council (the lowest tier of government in Bangladesh) this law reserves three seats for women. Under the implementation of this law elections were held in December 1997, with immense excitement and participation among the women of the country. More than 45,000 women were elected to council seats. This local initiative was an important step toward increasing participation of women in the country.



Khalida-Zia

Geography

Location: Southern Asia, between China and India

Area in Square Miles: 55,584 (about the size of Wisconsin)

Environmental Concerns: Water pollution, soil degradation, deforestation, severe overpopulation

Geographical Features: Mostly flat alluvial plain; hilly in the southeast

Climate



The monsoon brings 80% of Bangladesh's annual rainfall. About 60% of Bangladesh's rice is grown during the monsoon season. Sometimes severe cyclones with strong winds and high tides kill thousands of people every year. Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon-type climate, with a hot and rainy summer and a pronounced dry season in the cooler months. January is the coolest month of the year, with temperatures averaging near 78 degrees and April the warmest month, with temperatures ranging between 91 and 96 degrees with high humidity.

The climate is one of the wettest in the world; most places receive more than 60 inches of rain a year, and areas near the hills receive 200 inches of rain. Most rain falls during the monsoon, June to September, and little during the dry season, November to February. Strong shelters have been built on high grounds to protect people.

Cyclones And Floods

The coastal districts of Bangladesh, particularly those flanking the Meghna Estuary, are susceptible to serious damage from cyclones, which cause major losses of life and property.



In the early summer, April and May and late in the monsoon season, September to November storms of very high intensity often occur. They may create winds with speed of 100-150 miles per hour piling up the waters of Bay of Bengal to crests as high as 20 feet that crash with tremendous force onto the coastal areas and offshore islands.



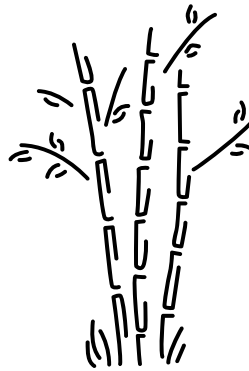
Since the early 18th century, when records were first kept, more than one million people have been killed in such storms -- 815,000 of them in three storms occurring in 1737, 1876 and 1970. Severe storms also occurred in May 1985, and April 1991. Lesser hazards in the region are hailstorms, particularly in March and April, and tornadoes.

Floods

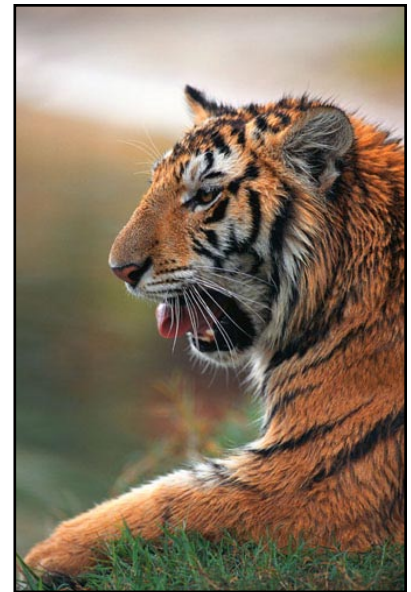
Bangladesh is one of the most flood-prone countries in the world. Essentially, it's the flood plain where two huge rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, carry the spring snowmelt from the towering Himalayan Mountains to the sea. When the rivers flood, so does Bangladesh. Bangladesh, being mostly formed of the Ganges delta, will be impacted severely if sea-levels rise as a result of the greenhouse effect.



Flora and Fauna



Bamboo



About 15% of Bangladesh is still forested: the three principal forest regions are the Madhupur jungle, the tidal forest (formed by tidal waves) in the coastal Sundarban (a swamp region in the Ganges delta), and the tropical rain forest of the Chittagong Hills.

Bamboo and rattan are abundant. White Tigers and other game are found in the Madhupur jungle and Sundarbans, crocodiles in the Sundarbans, and elephants, rhinoceroses, and leopards in the hill areas.

Government



Khalida-Zia

The president, while chief of state, holds a largely ceremonial post; the real power is held by the prime minister, who is head of the government. The president is elected by the legislature (Parliament) every 5 years.

The prime minister is appointed by the president. The prime minister must be a member of Parliament (MP) who the president feels commands the confidence of the majority of other MPs. The cabinet is composed of ministers selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president. At least 90% of the ministers must be MPs. The other 10% may be non-MP experts or “technocrats.”

The legislature is a one-house, 330-seat body. About 300 of its members are elected by universal suffrage at least every 5 years. The remaining 30 seats are reserved for women MPs, elected by the Parliament.

Economy

Currency (\$ U.S. Equivalent): 54.35 taka = \$1

Per Capita Income/GDP: \$1,470/\$187 billion

GDP: U.S. \$175.5 billion

Annual Growth: 4%

Inflation: 7%

Unemployment Rate: 35%

Natural Resources: Natural gas, arable land and timber

Major Industries: Jute manufacturing, cotton textiles, food processing, steel and fertilizer

Agriculture: Rice, jute, tea, wheat, sugarcane, potatoes, beef, milk and poultry

Major Trading Partners: Western Europe, United States, Hong Kong, Japan, India, China and Singapore

East Bengal – the region that was to become East Pakistan and is now Bangladesh – was a prosperous region of South Asia until modern times. It had the advantages of a mild, almost tropical climate, fertile soil, ample water, and an abundance of fish, wildlife, and fruit.



As early as the 13th century, the region was developing as an agrarian economy. It was not entirely without commercial centers, and Dhaka in particular, grew into an important city during the Mughal Empire.

The British, however, on their arrival in the early 17th century, chose to develop Calcutta as their commercial and administrative center in South Asia. The development of East Bengal was thereafter limited to agriculture. The colonial infrastructure of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reinforced East Bengal's function as the primary producer chiefly of rice and jute, for processors and traders in Calcutta and beyond.

The partition of British India, and the emergence of India and Pakistan in 1947, severely disrupted the former colonial economic system that had preserved East Bengal (now East Pakistan) as a producer of jute and rice for the urban industrial economy around Calcutta. East Pakistan had to build a new industrial base and modernize agriculture in the midst of a population explosion.

Post Independence Bangladesh had to face the destruction of whatever the infrastructure developed by then, due to war.

Economic problems continued to grow since then. The recent years of political unrest, created immense challenges to Sheikh Hasina's government. Among these problems are a diminishing world market for jute (the country's largest export product) and the lack of sufficient natural resources and energy sources to broaden its industrial base and create new employment.

High unemployment increased due to the loss of jobs for many Bangladeshis who worked in the Persian Gulf prior to the Gulf War in 1991. Skilled workers, who had earlier returned more than \$500 million in remittances to Bangladesh each year, were forced to return home and flooded the country's already overcrowded job market.

A devastating cycle of cyclones and floods has severely reduced domestic rice production which is barely sufficient to feed Bangladesh's large and growing population even in good times. A cyclone in May 1991, killed 130,000 people and the worst flood of the century, during the summer of 1998, paralyzed the central part of the country, killing 800 people and leaving almost 30 million homeless.

Natural disasters remain a constant threat to all aspects of life in Bangladesh. Yet the population continues to grow, though at a decreasing rate (currently about 1.59% per year).

It is necessary to have a more favorable distribution of water from the Ganges River through the Farakka Barrage, the Indian dam into Bangladesh. This serves as a vital source for irrigation and commerce in northwestern Bangladesh. Indicative of a new spirit of cooperation among India and its neighbors, a major agreement was signed by the prime ministers of Bangladesh and India, on December 12, 1996, to assure Bangladesh of at least half of the water flow through the Farraka Barrage.

Bangladesh has been fortunate in the support it has received from many government and independent agencies in response to its great needs. Donors, such as the United States (the fourth-largest bilateral donor) provided billions of dollars to reduce population growth and increase food availability. With continued grants of humanitarian and economic aid, and with stable, democratically elected leadership, a resilient and responsive people remain hopeful for their health and well-being as a nation.

Health

Life Expectancy at Birth: 60 years (male); 60 years (female)

Infant Mortality Rate (Ratio): 71.6:1,000

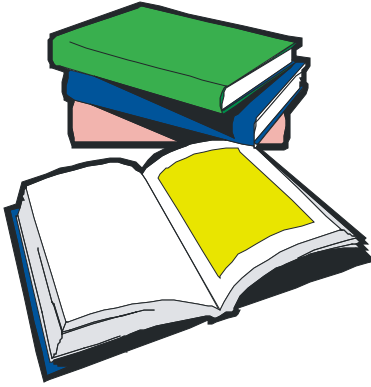
Physicians Available (Ratio): 1:4,759

In spite of many obstacles, overall life expectancy has increased from 27 to 60 years over the past two decades. Forty-five percent of the population has access to health care, and the number of hospital beds has doubled.



Education

Through history, Bangladesh has gone through various phases of educational systems. From the time of the English rule to the Bangladeshi system, education has evolved not only in methods but also in fundamental aspects like language and governance.



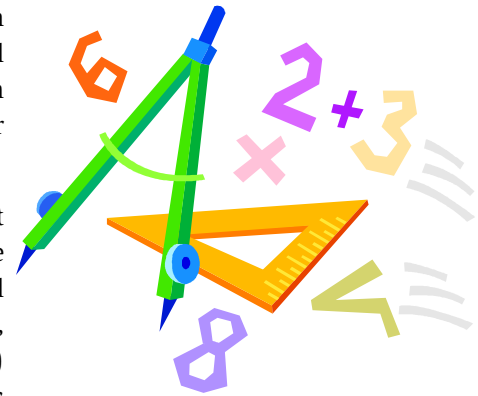
During the British rule, education was mainly reserved for the wealthy class. The medium of study was English as schools were run by religious nuns and other British people. The few natives who were fortunate to receive education were either from wealthy families or whose family had ties with the British governing body.

After the British had left the Indian Subcontinent, the territory presently known as Bangladesh became East Pakistan. Education during this period was still very scarce but those who had the financial resources attended schools that had opened with the English Language as the medium of instruction. There were also schools in operation by the British and/or Catholic Church. After independence in 1971, many forms of education were permitted to co-exist. Presently, the Bangladeshi system of education is divided into three different branches. Students are free to choose anyone of them provided that they have the means. These branches are: a) the English Medium, b) the Bengali Medium, and c) the Religious Branch.

The English Medium

The British system is still very influential in Bangladesh. Courses are all taught in English with the exception of the Bengali courses and the Religious course. However, English medium schools are mainly private and thus reserved for the wealthy class.

After three years of preschool, students must successfully pass through ten grades to be eligible for writing the Ordinary Level Exams, also called the O-Levels. Then after one more year of studies, students can write the Advanced Level (A-Level) Exams. Both these routines are offered for Arts students and to Science students.



The Bengali Medium

Alternative to the English Medium is the Bengali Medium, which is offered by the government. In the Bengali Medium, all the courses are offered in Bengali with the exception of English courses. The tuition fee is minimal compared to English schools but they still vary largely between schools. But everybody has the right to attend these schools provided that one meets the minimum criteria.

After three years of preschool, students in the Bengali medium do five years of primary school and then they move on to high school for grades five to ten. At the end of the tenth grade, one must write the Matriculation Examination.

Students who pass this examination proceed to two years of higher secondary or intermediate training, which culminate in a Higher Secondary School (HSC) examination. This leads to a bachelors after two years and masters after four years of study.

The Religious Branch

Bangladesh is a very poor country with millions of homeless children. To educate these children, there are religious institutions called “Madrashas” where these children are sheltered, fed and taught the ways of Islam. These children learn the scripts from the Koran and the regular prayers. Madrashas are generally linked to Mosques and the children usually serve the Mosque. As subsidies for these institutions are very low, often these establishments rely on public donations and donations to the Mosques. Higher studies for these establishments are close to non-existent and upon maturity; the children often become part of Islamic clergy.

The above are the main branches of the Bangladeshi system of education. Besides these, there are other disciplines such as cadet colleges and boarding schools where children are taught mainly under the military regime to join the national Army upon graduation. Even then, the common exams are still required by the students under these systems.

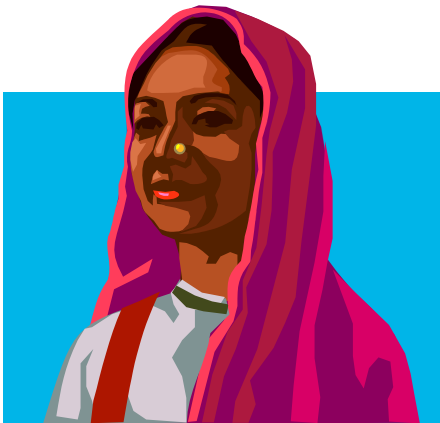
General Statistics

The current literacy rate of Bangladesh is about 35 percent. This is astonishingly low compared to other low income countries. Bangladesh spends only two percent of its GNP on education.

Children’s school performance in rural Bangladesh is extremely poor. About 40 percent of children never show up for school. Among those who enter primary school, only 40 percent complete it. A meager seven percent complete secondary school.

To develop education in Bangladesh, projects were undertaken by a few agencies with funds from the World Bank. These agencies include General Education Project (GEP) and the Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP). GEP’s main goal is to improve overall efficiency in schools and to give children easier access to education. Both the agencies work mainly in rural areas to build and maintain educational institutions where the population is exceptionally poor. Other goals, according to a 1990 World Bank report, are to recruit more female teachers, improve school management and curriculum, improve training for teachers and expand the existing scholarship program.

Gender Differences



The literacy rate among women is lower than for men. This is due to ancient customs and traditions. The perceived difference about the appropriateness of gender roles plays a significant part in the schooling of men and women.

In Bangladesh, 58 percent of males attend school whereas only 41 percent of females attend school. However, the recent commitment of the government and non-government agencies to decrease the gap between genders is working very well. Today, for those under 20, about 64 percent of males and 57 percent of women have attended school.

Culture and Society

Although it is one of the smaller countries of the subcontinent, it is also the most densely populated. More than 129 million people—almost half the population of the entire United States—live in an area smaller than the state of Wisconsin, at an average density of more than 2,000 people per square mile. Only 19 percent of these people live in cities, but even in rural areas, the land is very crowded.

Bangladesh has the most cohesive population in South Asia. Almost all citizens share their common Bengali ethnic and language identity, although the majority is Sunni Muslims. However, with so much going for it upon which to build a democratic nation – language, religion, culture, and a successful fight for its independence, the country has had extensive struggles to achieve political stability. Because of its large and rapidly growing population, its limited

resources, and a continuous succession of floods and cyclones, it has also had to struggle to achieve economic well-being for its people. It remains one of the poorest countries in the world; 61 % of the urban population, according to a recent Asian Development Bank survey, and 80 % of the total population, according to some estimates, live below the poverty line.

Isolated among the hills and jungles in the eastern regions of Bangladesh, approximately 300,000 tribal peoples continue to live in much the same way as they have for thousands of years.



National Language Of Bangladesh Bengali

ও খাবার খুঁজতে লাগল ।

ō Khaabbar Khunjte laglo! (He started to look for some food)

রবিবার সকালে সূর্য উঠে তাপ দিল,

Rabibare Sakaale surjo uthe taap dilo; (One Sunday morning the warm sun came up)

শুক্রবার ও পরপর পাঁচটা কমলা খেয়ে ফেলল । কিন্তু তবু ওর
ক্ষুধা মেটে না ।

Shukrabaare ō Parpankamala kheyefeinlo!

Kintu tabuh oer Kshudha mete noa!(One Friday he ate through five oranges but he was still hungry)

ঐ দিন রাতে ওর বেশ পেটে ব্যথা হল!

Se din raate oer bes Pete betha holo! (That night he had a stomachache!)

Folk Heritage

Bangladesh has a rich multi-faceted folk heritage, derived from its Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim roots. Weaving, pottery and terracotta sculpture are some of the earliest forms of artistic expression. Folk theatre is common in the villages and usually takes place during harvest time. Most classical dance takes its form from Indian models of dance, such as *Bharata Natyam* and *Kuchipudi*.

Bengali culture is best known for the work of its great poets – Rabindranath Tagore and Nasrul Islam.

Achievements

Surviving extensive flooding in 1975 and a horrific cyclone in 1991, the resilient people of Bangladesh continue to develop their wealth of human resources, mostly through volunteer and non-government agencies such as the Grameen Bank. In 1991, a national referendum to restrain the military and restrict the power of the executive branch of government made a strong commitment to parliamentary democracy.

Outside of the government channels, the Bangladeshi people have shown outstanding initiative in meeting the many challenges caused by population growth and rural poverty, through grassroots, voluntary organizations such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee. Such efforts have built local schools, improved farming practices.

The Grameen Bank is another important initiative to improve the plight of the poor from the ground up. It was founded in the 1970s by economics professor Mohammed Yunus to provide small loans without collateral to help the landless poor, in this country where more than 80% of the population lives in poverty. It has been successful in creating credit for more than 1.4 million borrowers, 90% of whom are women. The bank also trains its borrowers in management skills, public health, and family planning. Its effectiveness among the impoverished in Bangladesh has established it as a model for economic empowerment in many other countries.

Festivals

Festivals have always played a significant role in the life of the people of Bangladesh. Those are parts and parcels of Bengali culture and tradition.

Pahela Baishakh

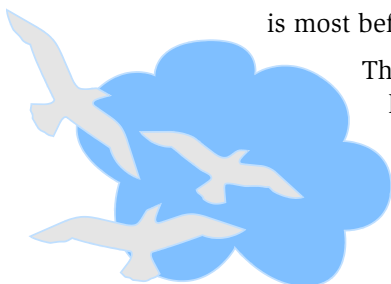
The advent of Bengali New Year is gaily observed throughout the country. The day (mid-April) is a public holiday. Most colorful daylong gatherings along with arrangement of cultural programs take place. Tournaments and boat races are held in cities and villages amidst great jubilation. Many fairs are held in Dhaka and other towns and villages.

Independence Day

March 26 is the day of Independence of Bangladesh. It is the biggest state festival. This day is most befittingly observed and the capital wears a festive look. It is a public holiday.

The citizens of Dhaka wake up early in the morning with the booming of guns heralding the day. Citizens including government leaders and socio-political organizations and freedom fighters place floral wreaths at the National Martyrs Monument at Savar. Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and other socio-cultural organizations hold cultural functions.

At night the main public buildings are illuminated to give the capital city a



dazzling look. Similar functions are arranged in other parts of the country.

Feb. 21, the National Mourning Day and World Mother Language Day

February 21, is observed throughout the country to pay respect and homage to the sacred souls of the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952. Blood was shed on this day at the Central Shahid Minar (near Dhaka Medical College Hospital) area to establish Bangla as a state language of the then Pakistan.

All subsequent movements, including the struggle for independence, owe their origin to the historic language movement. Very recently the day has been declared World Mother Language Day by UNESCO.

Eid-al-Miladunnabi

Eid-al-Miladunnabi is the birth day of Prophet Muhammad. He was born on 12th Rabiul Awal (Lunar Month). The day is a national holiday and the national flag is flown atop public and private houses and special food is served in orphanages, hospitals and jails. At night important public buildings are illuminated and *milad mahfils* (gatherings in praise of the prophet) are held.

Eid-al-Fitr

The largest Muslim festival observed throughout the world. This is held on the day following the Ramadan, the month of fasting. In Dhaka big congregations are held at the National *Eidgah* (an open space where people gathered for Eid prayers) and at other mosques.

Eid-al-Azha

Eid-al-Azha is the second largest festival observed by Muslims throughout the world. Eid congregations are held throughout the country. Animals are sacrificed in reminiscence of Hazrat Ibrahim's (AM) preparedness for the supreme sacrifice of his beloved son to Allah. It is a public holiday.



Muharram

The Muharram procession is a ceremonial mournful procession of the Muslim community. A large procession is brought out from the Hussaini Dalan Imambara on 10th Muharram in memory of the tragic martyrdom of Imam Hussain on this day at Karbala in Iraq. The same observations are made elsewhere in the country.

Durga Puja

Durga Puja, the biggest festival of the Hindu community continues for ten days, the last three days being a culmination with the idol immersed in rivers. In Dhaka the big celebrations are held at Dhakeswari Temple, where a fair is also held and at the Ram Krishna Mission.



Christmas

Christmas, popularly called "Bara Din (Big Day)," is celebrated with pomp in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country. Several daylong, large gatherings are held at St. Mary's Cathedral at Ramna, Portuguese Church at Tejgaon, Church of Bangladesh (Protestant) and Bangladesh Baptist Sangha at Dhaka. Functions include illumination of churches, decorating of Christmas trees and other Christian festivities.

Rabindra & Nazrul Jayanti

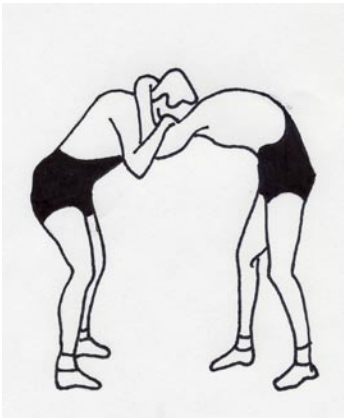
Birth anniversary of the noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore on the 25th Baishakh (May) and that of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on the 11th Jaystha (May) are observed throughout the country. Their death anniversaries are also marked in the same way. Big gatherings and song sessions organized by socio-cultural organizations are salient features of the observance of the days.

Tagore is the writer of the national anthem while National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam is famous as Rebel Poet.

Sports In Bangladesh

National Sport - Kabbadi

In Kabaddi, two teams compete with each other for higher scores, by touching or capturing the players of the opponent team. Each team consists of 12 players, of which seven are on court at a time, and five in reserve. The two teams fight for higher scores, alternating defense and offense. The court is as large as that for a dodge ball game. The game consists of two 20 minute halves, with a break of five minutes for change of sides.



The *kabaddi* playing area is 41 feet x 32.8 feet, divided by a line into two halves. The side winning the toss sends a “raider,” who enters the opponents’ court chanting, “kabaddi-kabaddi.” The raider’s aim is to touch any or all players on the opposing side, and return to his court in one breath. The person, whom the raider touches, will then be out. The aim of the opposing team, will be to hold the raider, and stop him from returning to his own court, until he takes another breath. If the raider cannot return to his court in the same breath while chanting “kabaddi,” he will be declared out. Each team alternates in sending a player into the opponents’ court. If a player goes out of the boundary line during the course of the play, or if any part of his body touches the ground outside the boundary, he will be out, except during a struggle.

The team scores a lona (a bonus of two points), if the entire opposition is declared out. The game then continues by putting all the players on both sides. Matches are staged on the basis of age groups and weight. Seven officials supervise a match – one referee, two umpires, two linesmen, a timekeeper and a scorer.

Soccer

Soccer is undeniably the most popular sport in Bangladesh. Bangladeshis have taken to soccer, which is actually called football in that part of the world. Big clubs have passionate fans that follow each and every aspect of their clubs.



Cricket



Cricket is another game which has a mass following in Bangladesh. There is a strong domestic league which on many occasions also saw Test players (the players that play on the highest level of world cricket) from many countries (Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, England) gracing the cricket fields of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has now joined the group of countries eligible to play test cricket.

Chess

Bangladesh has started to emerge as a growing chess nation. Bangladesh has two International Grand Masters, **Niaz Murshed** and **Ziaur Rahman**. **Reefat bin Sattar** is also another upcoming star of Bangladesh chess.



Literature



Bengali literature has its roots in poetry. Bengali poetry has its roots in its people. Long before the print medium was invented, folk tales had been told from one generation to the next by singing verses created by ordinary people. Stories were constructed in the course of their lives from materials collected from their own experiences and from famous stories or themes composed by past generations of “*Kobials*” (or folk poets) and bauls (or street singers).

Naveen Chandra Sen, introduced blank verses and sonnets and presented to the world his masterpiece epic poetry Meghnad Badh Kabya. This is the true beginning of modern Bengali poetry. Bengali poetry reached its peak in the hands of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Even though he was most widely known as a poet, Tagore was simultaneously a novelist, playwright, lyricist, music composer, painter and philosopher. His book of lyrics called *Geetanjali* translated into English by himself earned him the Nobel Prize in 1913.

The history of Bengali prose is relatively new. New British officers of the East India Company were taught Bengali so that they could converse with the natives. To this end Nathaniel B. Halhead published the Bengali grammar in 1778. It was not until 1815, when Raja Rammohan Roy published his first book of prose called *Vedanta Grantha* that a break with the tradition was established. Bengali prose achieved in literary form under Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath Tagore.

Art Scene

The history of contemporary art in Bangladesh begins at the time of partition of the subcontinent in 1947, when Zainul Abedin (who came into public eye with his sketches of the Bengal Famine of 1943) set up the first art school in the newly formed state of Pakistan. This institute trained and nurtured an entire generation of new artists whose work reflected the changing times. This was the generation that depicted social reality in their art.

The art of the fifties took to abstraction. There were probably two reasons for this. First, it was an inner compulsion, an urge to express themselves through a language, through

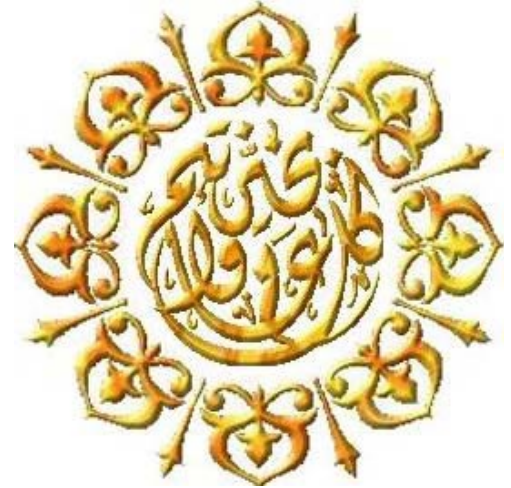
metaphors, images, sensibilities and symbolism that they thought most clearly represented their artistic, emotional and intellectual understanding of their art. The second reason can be ascribed to a social compulsion. The establishment disapproved any human or figurative representation as it supposedly contravened religious strictures.

The creation of Bangladesh as a separate entity influenced the art of the 1970s. A new generation of artists came to the scene that adopted a more figurative language and tried to initiate an interaction between the traditional and the contemporary. A good number of artists, including sculptors and printmakers, began to work in more varied and innovative styles.

Presently, some of the artists are involved with “analytical realism.” There is at the same time, a sustained satiric tone that brings out the themes as well as identifies the artists’ position and their commitment to the society. Reconstruction of myth is also a characteristic of contemporary art. Painters are going back to the mythical past for themes and symbols. Artists are also going back to folk art – although in a much more limited way.

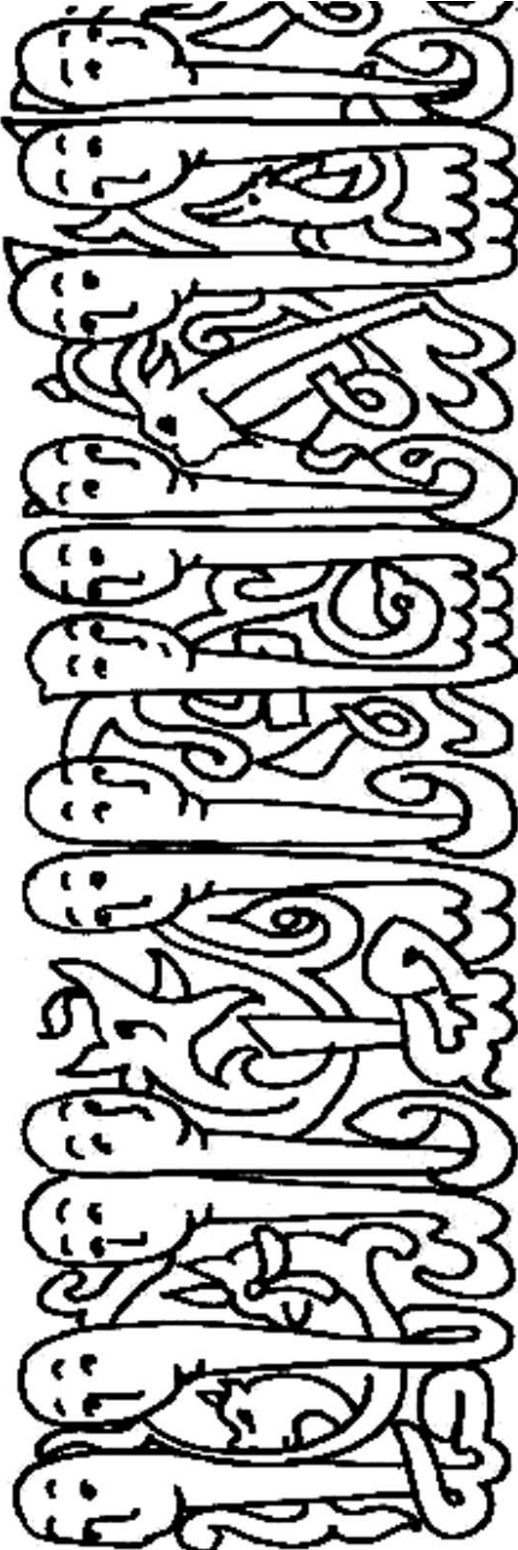
Bangladesh received an impetus when the government of Bangladesh organized the First Asian Art Biennial in 1981. It is a month long event held every two years in Dhaka where Asian countries exhibit contemporary works of paintings, sculptures and graphics. Nine such Art exhibitions have been held so far.

Contemporary Art of Bangladesh is a well-written record of the history of contemporary art in the country. The visuals are stunning and so are the layouts, a must for South Asian art lovers.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Calligraphic Design Coloring Project



Sota-pani

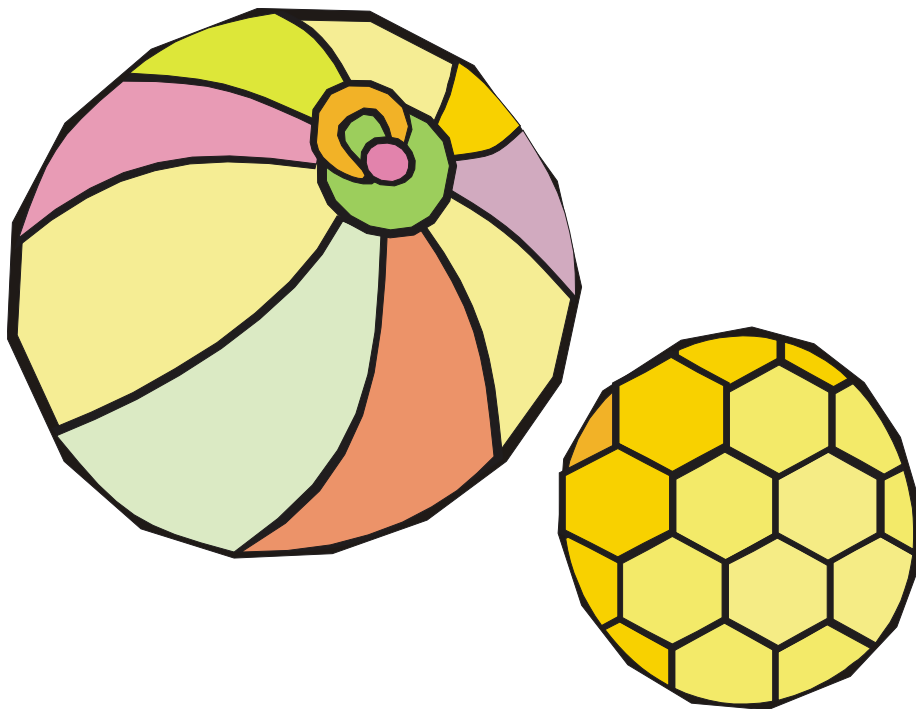
Playing area:	A clear space, indoors or outdoors
Number of players:	Ten or more
Materials:	A handkerchief or scarf with a knot tied in one corner

One player is chosen to be IT. The others sit or squat, evenly spaced, in a circle. IT carries the handkerchief, the *sota*, and runs round the circle of players. The players may not turn their heads to watch, but must look straight ahead. Players must use clues to discover if the handkerchief has been dropped behind them. For instance, they can watch the eyes and facial expressions of the players seated across from them, who can see what IT is doing. The player who is IT tries all sorts of tricks to confuse the other players. After a few circles, he drops the *sota* behind one of them, and that player picks up the *sota* and chases IT, trying to hit him with the knotted end. The two race round the circle once, and IT tries to beat the player to his seat. If IT reaches the empty space in the circle first, the other player must become IT in his place.

Gul Tara (Tossing to the Stars)

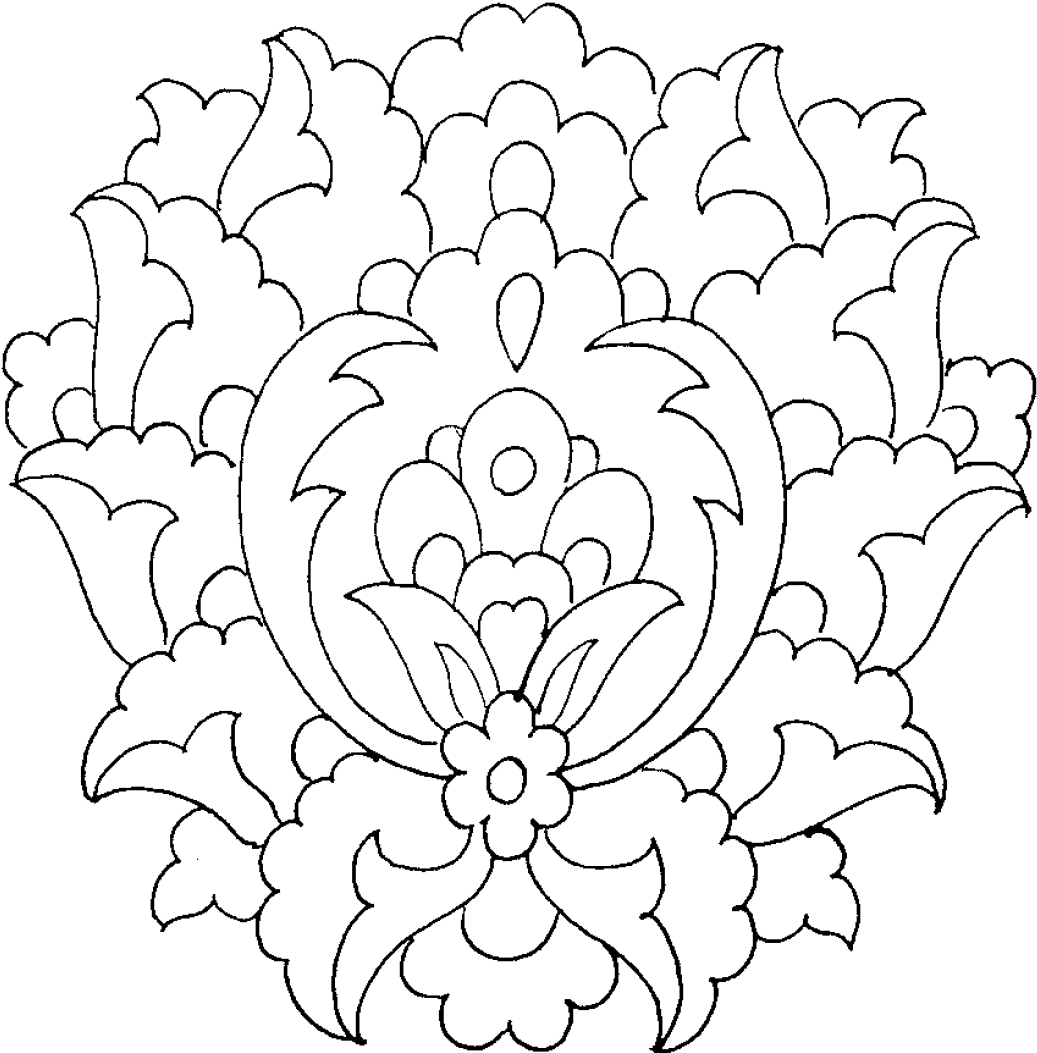
Playing area:	A clear outdoor space
Number of players:	Five or more
Materials:	A rubber ball that the players can easily throw straight up and catch. The players throw the ball at each other, so it should be appropriately soft.

One player begins by throwing the ball as high as possible. The other players try to catch the ball before it touches the ground, and the one who catches it throws it up again. However, if one catches the ball, the thrower must pick up the ball and then tag another player (by touching or throwing). The tagged player becomes the new thrower. This game is also popular in India.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Floral Design Coloring Project - A



Floral Design Coloring Project - B

