

GLIMPSES ON BANGLADESH

A COUNTRY OF HOPE, LOVE, COURAGE, AND RESILIENCE



BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC STUDIES (BIISS)

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FOREWORD

Bangladesh, once known as an 'international basket case', is a rising star now. In 1971, Bangladesh was born as a new nation on the world's map through the sacrifice of millions of lives. Immediately after independence, the country struggled through a low profile in terms of socio-economic growth and poverty reduction. Throughout the journey of 50 years of independence, it has attained remarkable progress in spite of facing numerous hurdles. Overcoming the challenges step by step, Bangladesh is now considered as a 'role model of development' due to its rapid economic growth. On the eve of the country's 50 years of independence, it is crucial to revisit Bangladesh's progress from a holistic point of view. Reflecting on this, the book is an attempt to uphold how the country has turned itself from a 'basket case' to a 'development surprise', and how it is gradually marketing itself and making a place in the international arena.

The book is a snapshot and an important glimpse of the country's success from different fronts. In order to uphold the success stories, the book includes 10 chapters on different issues which are the reflections and combination of the country's wishful desires. From Chapter 1 to Chapter 10, the book covers a wide range of issues including Bangladesh's history, the struggle for independence, culture, geography and demographic features, overall state of economic growth, environment, and climatic vulnerabilities, advancement of science and technology, defence, and security as well as its foreign policy.

It is also crucial to mention that the book is a reflection of Bangladesh's journey towards development. Currently, Bangladesh's growth rate is almost 6.54 per cent (in 2022) which is considered as one of the fastest growth in the region. In response to the challenge to achieve developmental sustainability, the government has attempted three consecutive plans: 'Vision 2021' (achieving a higher standard of living with equitable socio-environmental justice), 'Vision 2030' (attaining a zero poverty rate), and 'Vision 2041' (maintaining sustainable economic growth as a developed country). Some visions have already been achieved while others are awaiting to be accomplished. How a country with a vast population has ensured such progress is a wonder for others. It is hoped that Bangladesh's plan of graduation to Least Developed Country (LDC) within 2026 will bring a great transition to the country.

At present, the country's popular slogan for 'Digital Bangladesh' is driving Bangladesh's economic growth a step ahead. Along with this, Bangladesh has achieved remarkable progress on several social development indicators. Life expectancy has been increased, infant and child mortality reduced, gender disparity largely eliminated and female participation rates in the labour force are enhanced. However, Bangladesh's relentless efforts have brought successes in some areas for what the country stands at this position now.

Bangladesh, once known as a disaster prone country, is a climate resilient country now. Being a lower riparian country, the foremost spirit regarded as the pulse of the nation is its long journey of resilience. It is one of the leading countries which formulates climate change strategy and other action plans that are considered as blueprints for other climate-vulnerable countries. With pride, Bangladesh has chaired the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) for two years.

Bangladesh has a peace-loving image worldwide. Being one of the largest contributors to peacekeeping operations, the country has already achieved pride for its determination towards peace and tranquility as well as resolving outstanding issues of war-prone countries. In a similar vein, considering its geopolitical priority, Bangladesh always avoids confronting issues with its immediate neighbours. Hosting a huge number of Rohingya refugees is a showcase of humanity from Bangladesh's side despite having its limited resources. Besides, the maritime delimitation is another glaring example of an amicable solution to a problem with its neighbours. This is because the popular dictum 'friendship to all, malice towards none' is seen as the core and the biggest strength of Bangladesh's foreign policy.

Over the years, Bangladesh, without any qualm, has been able to uphold itself as a separate entity. The tags 'Made in Bangladesh' and 'Branding Bangladesh' enhanced its image as well as brought enormous glory. Taking into account the records of the attainments so far, and of course, overcoming all odds, Bangladesh can be viewed as a country of 'hope and aspiration'. On the golden jubilee of the country's independence, Bangladesh is on the verge of reaching many more milestones including its flagship fast-track mega projects. So, I welcome you to go through this book and get to know Bangladesh-a country of hope, love, courage, and resilience.



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PREFACE

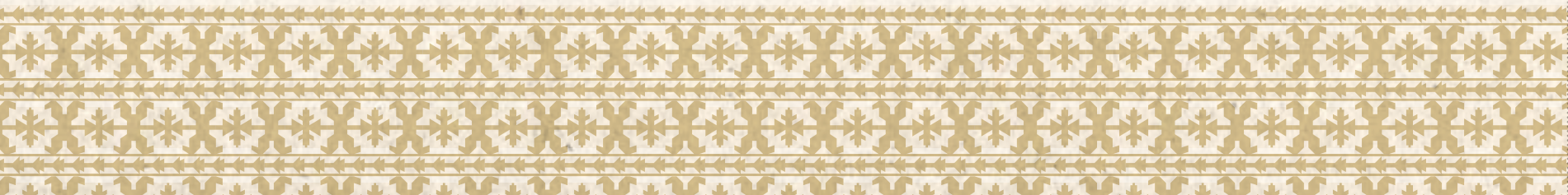
Dear friends at home and abroad, welcome to Bangladesh! Let us introduce a courageous nation that sacrificed lives for their mother tongue. Bangladesh lost 3 million lives in a nine-month long Independence War in 1971. It is a country of hope, love, struggle, and resilience. The people of Bangladesh are brave, hardworking, smiling, and love to struggle to be self-sufficient. Bangladesh has secured 68th position among 149 countries as per the World Happiness Report 2021. Bangladesh is mostly surrounded by India, but the southeast boundary is shared with Myanmar. The Bay of Bengal is in the southern part covering an area of 2,600,000 square kilometres (sq. kms). The country is self-sufficient in food despite having a vast population.

We cordially welcome visitors to Bangladesh to explore its glorious heritage and vibrant historical relics. The country is enriched with archaeological sites, religious establishments and monuments, resorts, beaches, wildlife, forests, and small ethnic groups. The colourful traditions and festivals of different ethnic groups will also attract you. Other traditional programmes like Pohela Boishakh (Bengali New Year), Pohela Falgun (1st Day of Spring), and religious festivals will amuse you. You will love to discover the scenic beauty of Bangladesh. The whole country is nested with hundreds of rivers, their tributaries, and distributaries. It has the world's longest natural, unbroken, and sandy sea beach in Cox's Bazar and the largest natural mangrove forest in the world (the Sundarbans).

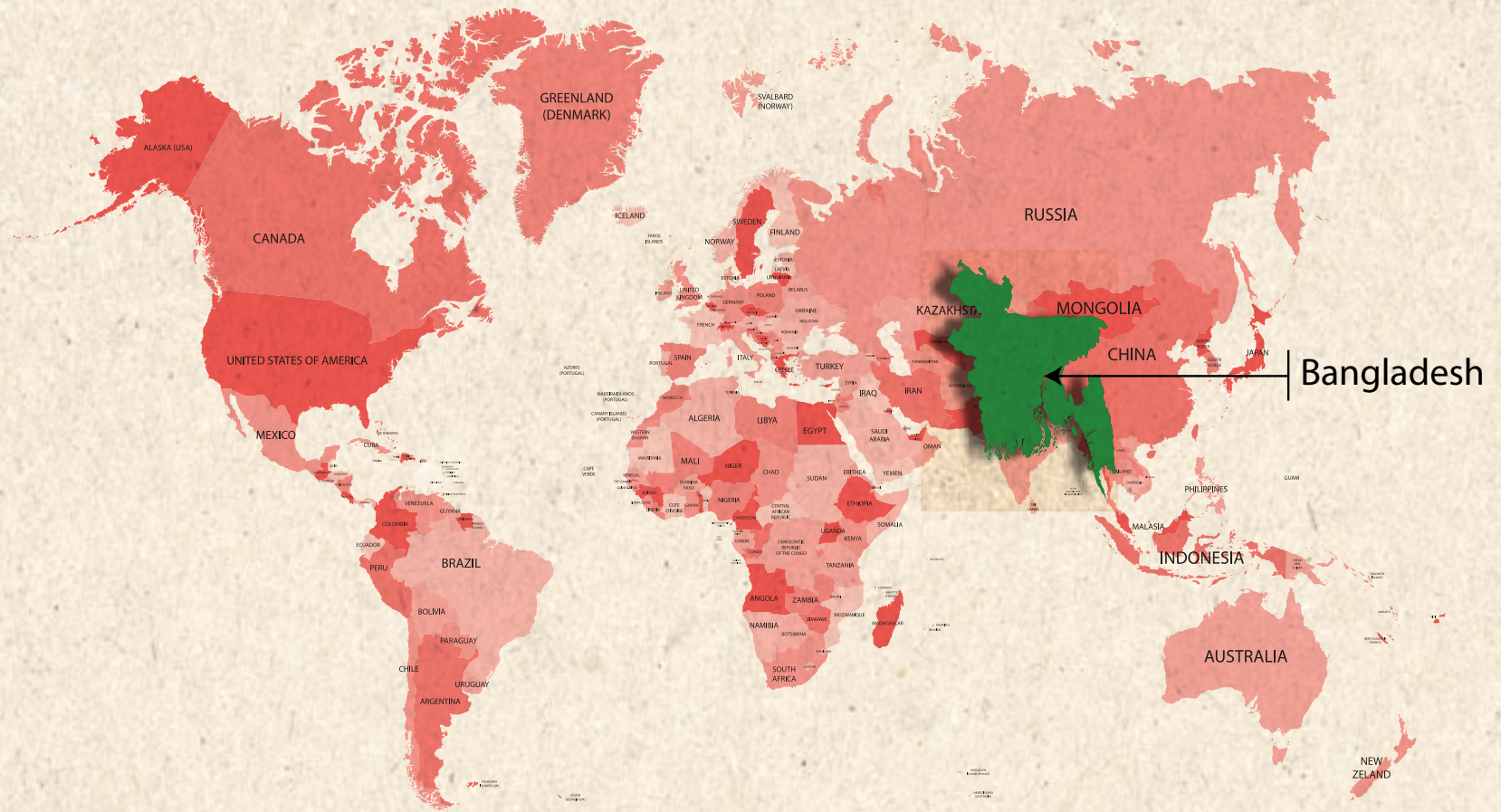
Bangladeshis are food lovers and love to prepare traditional food in each season. Bangladesh has six seasons and seasonal variations offer you different kinds of flowers and fruits. People are very hospitable, warm-hearted and fond of entertaining others. You will love Bangladeshi cuisine. Noteworthy handicrafts such as nakshi kantha (embroidered quilt), pottery, woodwork, cotton, jute, silk, muslin, and jamdani are splendid to maintain the legacy of Bangladeshi pride across the world. The country is rich in traditional art, music, and dances (folk and small ethnic groups).

Maintaining a sustainable growth, Bangladesh is aiming to become a developed country by the year 2041. It is one of the best destinations for entrepreneurs from around the globe as people are very committed and trustworthy. From the Human Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) perspective, the country is progressing well.

Now we would like to introduce wonderful Bangladesh in the following pages.



BANGLADESH'S LOCATION IN WORLD MAP



NATIONAL ANTHEM

আমার সোনার বাংলা,
আমি তোমায় ভালবাসি ।
চিরদিন তোমার আকাশ,
তোমার বাতাস,
আমার প্রাণে বাজায় বাঁশি ।।
ও মা,
ফাগুনে তোর আমের বনে
ছাণে পাগল করে
মরি হায়, হায় রে-
ও মা,
অশ্রুনে তোর ভরা ক্ষেতে,
আমি কী দেখেছি মধুর হাসি ।।
কী শোভা, কী ছায়া গো,
কী স্নেহ, কী মায়া গো,
কী আঁচল বিছায়েছ
বটের মূলে,
নদীর কূলে কূলে ।
মা, তোর মুখের বাণী
আমার কানে লাগে
সুধার মতো,
মা, তোর বদন খানি মলিন হলে
আমি নয়ন
ও মা, আমি নয়ন জলে ভাসি ।।
সোনার বাংলা,
আমি তোমায় ভালবাসি ।

My golden Bengal,
I love you.
Forever your skies,
Your air set my heart in tune
As if it were a flute.
In spring, O mother mine
The fragrance from your mango groves
Makes me wild with joy,
Ah, what a thrill!
In autumn, O mother mine
In the full blossomed paddy fields
I have seen spread all over sweet smiles!
Ah, what a beauty, what shades,
What affection, what tenderness!
What a quilt have you spread
At the feet of banyan trees
And along the bank of every river
Oh mother mine, words from your lips
Are like nectar to my ears.
Ah, what a thrill!
If sadness, O mother mine
Casts a gloom on your face,
My eyes are filled with tears!
My golden Bengal,
I love you.

NATIONAL FLAG OF BANGLADESH



Explanation of the National Flag

'The national flag is supposed to be rectangular in size in the proportion of length to width 10:6 bearing a red circle on the body of the green' — is the first sentence of the third section of the legislation of 'The Bangladesh National Anthem, Flag and Emblem Order, 1972'. The country's national flag is the symbol of an epic struggle. The red circular disc symbolises blood of the thousands of Bangalis sacrificed their lives in the entire course of the country's glorious Liberation War in 1971. It also symbolises the sun rising over Bangladesh. And, the color green is for the lushness of the fields of the country. It is also believed to be symbolising the vitality, youthfulness, greenery, and the land as agrarian since the pre-Vedic age.

INTRODUCING BANGLADESH



National Animal
(Royal Bengal Tiger)



National Bird
(Magpie)



National Fruit
(Jack Fruit)



National Fish
(Hilsha)



National Flower
(Water Lily)