

BANGLADESH



KEY FACTS

POPULATION (2011 Census):

144,043,697

AREA (UN 2006):

147,570 sq km

CAPITAL: Dhaka

CURRENCY: taka (BDT)

HEAD OF STATE:

President Abdul Hamid

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT:

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

parliamentary democratic republic

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM: unicameral

STATE STRUCTURE: unitary

LANGUAGES: Bangla (official)

NATIONAL ELECTIONS:

last: 2014, turnout: 40%; next: 2019

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT (2014):

MP 20.3%

LOCAL ELECTIONS:

upazila parishad:

last: 2014, turnout: 62.2%; next: 2019

municipalities and city corporation:

last: various, turnout: na; next: various

union parishad:

last: 2016, turnout: 77%; next: 2021

pourashava:

last: 2015, turnout: 74%; next: 2020

WOMEN COUNCILLORS (2016):

25.2%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE as a percentage of total government expenditure 2016/17:

8.0%

SUMMARY

Bangladesh is a democratic republic with two spheres of government: national and local. Local government is enshrined in the constitution and the main legislative texts include the Acts covering zila parishads (2000), upazila parishads (1998, amended 2009), union parishads (2009), pourashavas (2009), city corporations (2009) and hill district councils (1989). The local government division within the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives is responsible for local government, with the exception of the hill district councils, which are under the Ministry of Hill Tract Affairs. There are 64 administrative districts and below this a tiered system of local government comprising single-tier urban authorities made up of 11 city corporations and 329 municipalities (pourashavas); and a three-tiered rural local government system comprising 64 zila (district) parishads, 492 upazila (sub-district) parishads, 4,573 union parishads, and three hill district parishads. All local governments have the power to levy taxes and rates and the range of functions for which each type of authority is responsible varies widely: from public health and hospitals, education and social welfare for city corporations and municipalities to the implementation of development projects, public libraries and roads for upazila and union parishads.

1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Bangladesh is a democratic republic with a unicameral parliament called the Jatiya Sangsad.^{3.1} The head of state is the president, who is indirectly elected by members of the parliament for a maximum of two five-year terms. The 300 members of parliament (MPs) are directly elected by universal adult suffrage, and 50 seats are reserved for women. Following the 2014 national elections, 20.3% of MPs were women.^{3.1b} These are allocated from party lists in proportion to the seats won by each party. The president appoints the leader of the majority party as prime minister and head of government. On the advice of the prime minister the president appoints the cabinet, which currently has 45 members.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2.1 Constitutional provisions

Local government is enshrined in Chapter 3 of the constitution^{3.2a} of Bangladesh, which states: 'Local government in every administrative unit of the republic shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with law' (Article 59) and 'Parliament shall, by law, confer powers on the local government bodies to impose taxes for local purposes, to prepare their budgets and to maintain funds' (Article 60).

2.2 Main legislative texts

The main legislation for local government:

- Hill District Local Government Parishad Act 1989^{3.2b}
- Zila Parishad Act 2000^{3.2c}
- Local Government (Municipality) Act 2009^{3.2d}
- Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009^{3.2e}
- Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Act 1998 and amendment in 2009^{3.2f}
- Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009^{3.2g}

2.3 Proposed legislative changes

No current legislative changes proposed.

2.4 National urban policy

A draft national urban sector policy was produced by the local government division in 2011 and redrafted in 2014. It is currently awaiting formal adoption.^{3.2h}

3. STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Local government within the state

Bangladesh has 64 administrative districts, and below these a tiered system of local government comprising three levels of rural councils known as parishads, as well as single-tiered unitary urban municipalities.

3.2 Ministerial oversight

The local government division^{3.2a} (LGD) within the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MLGRD&C) is responsible for development and implementation of legislation regulating local government, with the exception of the Hill District Local Government Parishad Act 1989, which is administered by the Ministry of Hill Tract Affairs. The LGD is undertaking work and implementing programmes in order to attain Vision-2021, the seventh five year plan and the SDGs.

3.3 Council types

Local government is divided into rural, urban and hill districts, which all have similar functions. Urban authorities are single-tier and include 11 city corporations and a number of town pourashavas. Rural local government has three tiers: 64 zila (district) parishads, 492 upazila (sub-district) parishads, and 4,573 union parishads. There are also three hill district parishads. Alongside the 11 city corporations, other towns are governed by municipalities, which provide services to towns with populations of at least 15,000.



Table 3.1a Distribution of councils and population

Division	Zila parishads	Upazila parishads	Rural local government		Urban local government		Total local authorities	Population (2011 Census)	Population (2017 est.)	% rural 2011
			Union parishads	Hill district parishads	City corporations	Municipalities				
Barisal	6	42	356	0	1	26	431	8,489,476	na	87.5
Chittagong	8	103	959	3	2	64	1139	27,163,631	na	79.6
Dhaka	13	88	886	0	4	63	1054	45,568,835	na	73.9
Khulna	10	59	581	0	1	36	687	15,386,663	na	84.2
Mymensingh	4	35	353	0	0	28	420	**	na	
Rajshahi	8	67	565	0	1	62	703	18,027,522	na	84.0
Rangpur	8	58	535	0	1	31	633	15,434,619	na	88.1
Sylhet	4	40	338	0	1	19	402	9,181,937	na	88.0
TOTAL	64	492	4,573	3	11	329	5,469	139,252,683	157,826,578	80.8

**Mymensingh division population included in Dhaka division in the 2011 census Source: MLGRD&C communication with CLGF and 2011 Census^{3,2a}

The zila parishads are the largest rural authorities with upazila parishads and union parishads the intermediate and lowest levels respectively.

3.3.1 Urban councils: The heads of city corporations and municipalities are called mayors. Members are called councillors, and mayors and all councillors are directly elected every five years. There are specific numbers of reserved seats for women, who are elected directly.

3.3.2 Zila parishads: The law stipulates that there shall be a council for each district, except in the three hill districts. A zila parishad will consist of a chairperson, 15 open seats and five additional women's reserved seats. Bangladesh has never had elections for zila parishads

3.3.3 Upazila and union parishads: The chairpersons and all the members of these bodies – including women holding reserved seats – are directly elected. The chairpersons and members work full-time and receive an honorarium, which is fixed by the government. According to existing legislation upazila parishad councils must consist of a directly elected chair, representative members and women members in reserved seats. The representative members are the upazila parishad chair, two vice-chairs including one woman, municipality mayors of the area, union parishad chairs from within the upazila, and one-third of the women elected at municipality, union or upazila parishad level. All heads of government departments working in the upazila can attend and participate in any council meeting but are not entitled to vote.

4. ELECTIONS

4.1 Recent local elections

District council elections were held for the first time on 28 December 2016.

4.2 Voting system

All local elections are conducted by the Bangladesh Election Commission^{3,4}.

4.3 Elected representatives

No information is available

4.4 Women's representation

Following elections in the 2014–16 period, 25.2% (14,763/ 58,543) of councillors were women, up from 23.4% in the 2011–13 period, see table 3.1b. This reflects the reservation of seats: with 25% of union parishad seats reserved for women. Also a third of upazila parishad seats are reserved for women.

In the in the 2011–13 period, 0.8% (44/5,205) of mayors/ chairpersons were women, up from 0.5% in 2011–13 and 0.2% in the 2008–10 period. Additionally, Upazila parishads have two vice chairs of which under law one must be female.

5. SYSTEMS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Legal requirement and 5.2 Implementation

There are elaborate systems and procedures for community participation. The community can participate in the planning, budgeting and scheme implementation process, for which provision is made in law. The Government of Bangladesh has taken steps to improve systems for community engagement, including through the World Bank supported Local Governance Support Project (LGSP) and the Upazila Governance and Development Project.

Table 3.1b Women councillors and mayors following the last three local elections

Election	2008-10		2011-13		2014-16	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All councillors						
All female councillors	13,662	23.6	15,206	23.4	14,763	25.2
All male councillors	44,297	76.4	49,882	76.6	43,780	74.8
Total councillors	57,959	100	65,088	100	58,543	100.0
Union parishad (UP) Councillors	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female UP councillors	12,782	23.2	13,666	23.1	13,128	25.0
Male UP councillors	42,117	76.7	45,445	76.9	39,384	75.0
Total UP councillors	54,899	100	59,111	100	52,512	100.0
City corporations* (CC) Councillors	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female CC councillors	403	24.6	1,056	23.3	1,138	24.9
Male CC councillors	1,232	75.4	3,475	76.7	3,426	75.1
Total CC councillors	1,635	100	4,531	100	4,564	100.0

(Continued)

Table 3.1b Women councillors and mayors following the last three local elections

Election	2008-10		2011-13		2014-16	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Upazila parishad Councillors						
Female councillors	477	33.5	484	33.5	497	33.9
Male councillors	948	66.5	962	66.5	970	66.1
Total councillors	1,425	100	1,446	100	1,467	100.0
All mayor/chairpersons	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female mayors/ chairpersons	29	0.2	29	0.5	44	0.8
Male mayors/chairpersons	13,495	99.8	5,316	99.5	5,161	99.2
Total mayors/ chairpersons	13,524	100	5,345	100	5,205	100.0
Union parishad (UP) chairpersons	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female UP chairpersons	22	0.2	25	0.5	31	0.7
Male UP chairpersons	12,647	99.8	4,522	99.5	4,345	99.3
Total UP chairpersons	12,669	100	4,547	100	4,376	100.0
City corporations* (CC) mayors	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female CC mayors	5	1.3	2	0.6	5	1.5
Male CC mayors	375	98.7	314	99.4	335	98.5
Total CC mayors	380	100	316	100	340	100.0
Upazila parishad (UP) chairpersons	#	%	#	%	#	%
Female (UP) chairpersons	2	0.4	2	0.4	8	1.6
Male (UP) chairpersons	473	99.6	480	99.6	481	98.4
Total (UP) chairpersons	475	100	482	100	489	100.0

*City council figures includes Pourshavas Source: Communication from MLGRD&C with CLGF UNDP Asia Pacific Women's Participation in Local Government 2014

5.2 ICT use in citizen engagement

No information is available.

6. ORGANISED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are three main associations of local government: the Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF), the Upazila Parishad Foundation of Bangladesh (UPFB) and the Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB).³⁶ These give support to the chairpersons of union parishads, upazila parishads and municipalities on their rights, privileges and welfare. Membership is voluntary. Legislation does not provide for any formal establishment of associations.

7. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The MLGRD&C promotes intergovernmental relations in cooperation with various divisions and ministries.

8. MONITORING SYSTEMS

There are a number of bodies which provide scrutiny of local governments, including officials of national government, field officers from divisions and districts, and the national controller of accounts and audit.

9. FINANCE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

9.1 Local government expenditure

In 2016-17 local government expenditure was estimated to be 8.0% of total government expenditure, up slightly from the previous two years. (table 3.2b).

Table 3.2a Aggregate income and expenditure for local government 2016/17

Income	BDT crore	Expenditure	BDT crore
Centre-local transfers		Administration	
Restricted	na	Staff	na
Unrestricted	na	Property	na
	na	Other	na
Locally raised revenue			
Property taxes		Services	
Licences and fees	na	Water	na
Other	na	Road maintenance	na
	na	Other	na
TOTAL INCOME	na	PARTIAL EXPENDITURE	21,515

9.2 Locally raised revenue

All local governments have the power to levy taxes and rates. There are no aggregate figures available; however, the main sources of local government revenue are as follows:

- income from taxes, rates, tolls, fees and other charges
- rents and profits from property
- grants made by national government
- profits from investments
- donations and transfers of private or public funds.

9.3 Transfers

No information is available.

9.4 Loans

No information is available.

9.5 Local authority staff

In the upper tiers of local government each council recruits its own senior staff. The government recruits the staff in lower tiers of local government. Powers of discipline and dismissal remain with the original recruiting authority. From time to time national government staff are seconded to local government to fill senior positions such as the chief executive. The larger authorities are required to have a chief executive, secretary and chief finance officer. The districts, sub-districts and municipalities have engineer(s), either recruited locally or deployed by government agencies. The head of the paid service is normally referred to as the chief executive officer. Local authorities may propose their own internal organisational structure, but the MLGRD&C must give approval.



Table 3.2b Local government expenditure as % of total government expenditure 2012–2017

	2012-13 actual BT crore	2013-14 actual BT crore	2014-15 actual BT crore	2015-16 actual BT crore	2016-17 estimated BT crore
Total government expenditure	175,643	189,098	208,870	239,681	268,096
Total local government expenditure (partial)	12,425	12,724	16,394	18,596	21,515
Local government expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure	7.1	6.7	7.8	7.8	8.0

10. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICE DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY

10.1 Overview of local government service delivery responsibility

Services provided vary across the different local government.

10.1.1 City corporations and municipalities:

The main responsibilities of city corporations and municipalities are

- water, sanitation and drainage
- refuse collection and disposal
- births, deaths and marriages registration
- public health, hospitals, health centres and medical aid
- bathing places, dhobi ghats
- fisheries, milk processing and markets
- slaughterhouses
- animal husbandry, stray animals, farms
- building control and regulation, development plans and community development projects
- public streets and traffic control
- civil defence, flood, and fire services
- burial and burning places
- arboriculture, gardens, open spaces and forests
- education and libraries
- culture, fairs and shows
- social welfare.

10.1.2 Zila and hill district parishads: The main responsibilities of zila parishads and hill district parishads are as follows:

- implementing development projects
- public libraries
- roads, culverts and bridges not covered by upazila parishads, municipalities or the national government
- gardens, playgrounds, open places and trees in public areas
- ferry ghats not maintained by other levels of government
- rest-houses and inns
- assisting upazila parishads
- implementing the development plan assigned by the national government.

Discretionary services include:

- education and culture
- social and financial welfare
- public health and public works.

10.1.3 Upazila and union parishads:

The main functions of upazila and union parishads are as follows:

- developing agriculture, forests, fisheries, livestock, education, health, cottage industries, communication, irrigation and flood protection
- family planning promotion
- developing local resources
- maintaining public property such as roads, bridges, canals, embankments, telephones and electricity lines
- reviewing the development activities of other agencies
- encouraging sanitation
- registration of births, deaths, blind people, beggars and destitute people
- administering the Census.

10.1.4 Additional for union parishads:

- law and order
- maintaining the civil status register.

10.2 ICT use in service delivery

Towards a Digital Bangladesh, the government has established digital centres in every union parishad. The LGD has established digital centres in Upazila parishad, zila parishads, pourashavas and every ward of city corporations. Tablet PCs with Teletalk SIMs have been distributed to vice-chairpersons of all upazila parishads. Other LGD initiatives include hosting official websites, distribution of computers, and ICT training for unemployed youths. Further, steps have also been taken to provide free internet browsing facilities. Birth and death registration and many other services are made available online.

10.3 The role of local government in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Bangladesh National Development Plan is aligned with the SDGs.^{310a} The LGD has arranged workshops on the SDGs, and the role and contribution of local government in achieving them under the Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP), with financial support from the European Union, (EU), Danida, UNCDF and the UNDP. The local government division is leading and participating in the data gap analysis of many of the SDG indicators^{310b}.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL WEBSITES

- 3.1a National web portal www.bangladesh.gov.bd
- 3.1b Women in national parliaments. Inter-Parliamentary Union www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm
- 3.2a Constitution of Bangladesh http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf_part.php?id=367
- 3.2b Hill District Local Government Parishad Act 1989
- 3.2c Zila Parishad Act 2000
- 3.2d Local Government (Municipality) Act 2009
- 3.2e Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009
- 3.2f Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Act 1998 and amendment in 2009
- 3.2g Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009.
- 3.2h UN Human Settlements country paper: www.unescap.org/hues/lgstudy/country/bangladesh/bangladesh.html
- 3.3a 2011 Census http://bbs.dhaka.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.dhaka.gov.bd/law_policy/6ed6b42c_2015_11e7_8f57_286ed488c766/Socio-Economic%20and%20demographic%20Report%202012.pdf
- 3.3b Local government division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives www.lgd.gov.bd
- 3.4 Election Commission www.ec.org.bd/English/index.php
- 3.5 No references for this section
- 3.6 Municipal Association of Bangladesh www.mab-bd.org
- 3.7 No references for this section
- 3.8 No references for this section
- 3.9 calculated by CLGF from the figures provided by the MLGRE&C from IBAS finance division report
- 3.10a Bangladesh National Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-21 www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/National-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf
- 3.10b Data Gap Analysis of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SDG-DATA-Gap-Final-Draft.pdf
- 3.11a UN 2012 statistics surface area <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2006/Table03.pdf>
- 3.11b Commonwealth Local Government Knowledge Hub www.clgf.org.uk/resource-centre/knowledge-hub.
- 3.11c UNDP HDR Bangladesh country profile <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BGD>



Annex 4a Summary of service provision in different spheres of government in Bangladesh

Services	Delivering authority					Remarks
	National government	Zila parishads	Upazila parishads	Union parishads	City corporations and municipalities	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION						
Police	■			■	■	
Fire protection	■					
Civil protection	■					
Criminal justice	■			■		
Civil status register				■		
Statistical office	■					
Electoral register	■					
EDUCATION						
Pre-school (kindergarten and nursery)		■	■	■	■	
Primary	■	■	■	■		
Secondary	■	■				
Vocational and technical	■					
Higher education	■					
Adult education	■	■	■	■	■	
SOCIAL WELFARE						
Family welfare services	■	■	■	■	■	
Welfare homes	■					
Social security	■					
PUBLIC HEALTH						
Primary care	■	■	■	■	■	
Hospitals	■	■			■	
Health protection		■	■	■	■	
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING						
Housing	■					
Town planning	■				■	
Regional planning	■					
TRANSPORT						
Roads	■	■	■	■	■	
Transport	■	■	■	■	■	
Urban roads	■					
Urban rail	■					
Ports	■					
Airports	■					
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SANITATION						
Water and sanitation	■	■	■	■	■	
Refuse collection and disposal		■	■	■	■	
Cemeteries and crematoria					■	
Slaughterhouses					■	
Environmental protection	■	■	■	■		
Consumer protection	■	■				
CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORTS						
Theatres and concerts	■	■	■	■	■	
Museums and libraries	■	■	■	■	■	
Parks and open spaces	■	■	■	■	■	
Sports and leisure facilities	■	■	■	■	■	
Religious facilities	■	■	■	■	■	
UTILITIES						
Gas services	■					
District heating						
Water supply	■	■	■	■		
Electricity	■					
ECONOMIC						
Agriculture, forests and fisheries	■	■	■	■		
Local economic development/promotion	■	■	■	■		
Trade and industry	■					
Tourism	■	■	■	■	■	

■ sole responsibility service ■ joint responsibility service ■ discretionary service

