



# Bangladesh



## Country Overview:

*Location:* Southern Asia, bordering the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and India

*Size:* 143,998 sq km

*Population:* 163,654,860 (July 2013 est.)

*Capital:* Dhaka

*Exports-commodities:* garments, frozen fish and seafood, jute and jute goods, leather

*Imports-commodities:* machinery and equipment, chemicals, iron and steel, textiles, foodstuffs, petroleum products

*Currency:* Bangladeshi Taka

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

*Religion:* Muslim 89.5%, Hindu 9.6%, other 0.9%

*Government type:* parliamentary democracy

*Chief of State:* President Abdul HAMID (since 24 April 2013)

*Head of Government:* Prime Minister Sheikh HASINA (since 6 January 2009)

*Language:* Bangla (official, also known as Bengali), English.



## Gana Prajatantri Bangladesh

### Meetings and Negotiations

-Arrive at meetings **on time** even though you may be kept waiting.

-Meetings usually begin with a fair amount of small-talk and often times **no** business is discussed during the initial meeting.

-Meeting agendas are **loosely** followed and meetings are often lengthy.

-It is usually **best** to defer to the most senior person in the room.

-Periods of **silence** are considered acceptable; avoid interrupting.

-**Avoid** hard selling, pressure tactics, and any sort of conflict; maintaining the **semblance of harmony** is important.

-Decisions usually come from the top down and tend to take some time to be made.

### Business Attire

-Dress is quite **conservative** for both men and women.

-Men will wear conservative, dark

colored suits.

-Women will wear conservative business suits or dresses, and blouses are appropriate. **Avoid** tight-fitting and revealing clothing, no sleeveless attire. Dresses should not reveal too much of the legs.

-Jeans and less casual attire are **not** recommended for a first meeting.

### Behavior

-Business cards usually exchanged after **initial** introduction.

-**Avoid** eating and drinking with your left hand, always use your right.

-For men, handshakes are acceptable, however for women, a handshake is not common (it is best to wait to see if a hand is extended before doing so).

-The thumbs up sign is considered a **rude** gesture.

-It is **common** to remove one's shoes in places of worship, people's homes, and shops/businesses.

-The head wobble signifies "yes", not "no".

-**Maintain** eye contact with members of the same sex, but not for an extended amount of time.

-Avoid direct eye contact with members of the opposite sex.

### Gift Giving

-Gifts are not usually exchanged at a first business meeting.

-Gifts are especially given after religious holidays Ramadan and Hajj.

-Receive gifts with **both** hands and do not open gifts in front of the gift giver.

### Appropriate Gifts:

-chocolates, pastries, or sweets

### Gifts to Avoid:

-wine or any liquor

-non-halal meat

-white flowers or frangipanis (given in times of mourning)

-money

## Business Tips continued

### Conversation

-Smoking or speaking loudly in front of elders is considered **rude**. In general, **avoid** loud behavior or any expression of anger.

-A verbal greeting of "**Salam Aleikum**" tends to be most common; the appropriate response is "wa aleikum salam".

-Be aware that Bangladeshis are quite **indirect** communicators; ask several questions to be certain what is actually meant by vague response.

-Bangladeshis stand closely together when speaking with someone of the same **gender** and touch is common.

### Topics to Discuss:

-show **sympathy** towards

uncontrollable rains/flooding which occur every year

-comment on jute (natural, sturdy fiber) production

-Patron Sheikh Rahman Mujibur ("Father" of Bangladesh)

### Topics to Avoid:

-Hinduism

-Pakistan

-India