

# Riskline / Destination Report

This document was generated on 22 December 2023



# BANGLADESH

## Overall risk level

<p><b>Low</b> Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b> Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> Exercise caution</p>	<p><b>High</b> Reconsider travel</p>	<p><b>Extreme</b> Defer non-essential travel</p>
--	---	---	--	--

The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

## Security risk level

<p><b>Low</b> Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b> Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> Exercise caution</p>	<p><b>High</b> Reconsider travel</p>	<p><b>Extreme</b> Defer non-essential travel</p>
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

## Covid-19 risk level

<p><b>Low</b> Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b> Take normal safety precautions</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> Exercise caution</p>	<p><b>High</b> Reconsider travel</p>	<p><b>Extreme</b> Defer non-essential travel</p>
<p>Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to <b>Low Risk</b> locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities.</p>	<p>Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to <b>Moderate Risk</b> locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to <b>Medium Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to <b>High Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities.</p>	<p>Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to <b>Extreme Risk</b> locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities.</p>

# Overview

---

## Upcoming Events

24 December 2023 - 01 January 2024

- **Moderate risk: Officials to tighten security measures nationwide from 24-31 December**

Officials will tighten security measures nationwide, including at churches in southern areas of Dhaka and Christian populated areas as well as in diplomatic areas, from 24 December-26 December and on 31 December for Christmas and New Year festivities. Moreover, special operations were likely to be conducted from 28-31 December to prevent drug abuse.

24 December 2023 - 25 December 2023

- **Medium risk: Opposition activists announce nationwide blockade on 24 December**

Activists belonging to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and other opposition parties announced plans to hold a dawn-to-dusk, road-rail-waterway blockade between 06:00-18:00 local time (00:00-12:00 GMT) nationwide on 24 December, to demand the resignation of the Awami League party-led government ahead of the upcoming general elections.

29 December 2023 - 30 December 2023

- **Moderate risk: PM Hasina to address campaign rally in Barisal on 29 December**

Awami League members confirmed that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address a campaign rally in the vicinity of the district headquarters and the Bangabandhu Udyan (Bells Park) in Barisal, Barisal division, from 15:00 local time (09:00 GMT) on 29 December, ahead of the upcoming general elections.

# Travel Advisories

---

## ● Medium risk: Election-related violence in urban areas nationwide

Exercise caution for travel to Bangladesh, particularly urban areas such as **Dhaka**, **Chittagong**, **Khulna** and **Sylhet**, in the medium-term due to political violence ahead of the general elections on 7 January 2024.

Election Commission officials in Bangladesh have announced that the next general election will be held on 7 January 2024. The country has a long history of election-related political violence; the trend continues as **Dhaka** and other cities are already witnessing shutdown strikes, protest clashes and significant disruptions to travel and services. The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) called for a 48-hour nationwide transport blockade and protest actions on 31 October against the Awami League party-led government, which resulted in the death of at least one person and left dozens of others injured in clashes between rival party members; multiple cases of arson attacks targeting passenger buses and other vehicles were also reported. Similar protests, clashes and arson attacks continue as the BNP, along with other opposition groups, regularly call for more such blockades. Affected areas include **Dhaka's Uttara, Matuail, Mugda, Syedabad, Gulshan** and **Lalbagh** areas, and other urban areas such as **Savar** and **Gazipur** in **Dhaka division**, **Chittagong** in **Chittagong division**, and **Bogura** in **Rajshahi division**. Minor explosions involving crude bombs are also reported in some areas. Hundreds of policemen and Border Guard personnel remain deployed in areas across the country; security forces have been known to use heavy-handed measures to disperse protesters. At least 139 opposition activists have already been arrested in the country. The ruling Awami League party officially kicked off its election campaign period on 20 December, while the BNP called for boycotting the election after their demands for a caretaker government to conduct the election were not met.

Travellers should expect robust security measures, travel disruptions including delays and suspension of bus services, and disruptions to essential services and communications in areas nationwide, particularly urban areas hit by violence. Election-related unrest is likely to continue in the country well after the polling is conducted. Visitors should particularly avoid areas that house party offices,

government buildings and electoral infrastructure. Avoid all large gatherings and campaign rallies due to the risk of escalation to clashes. Comply with all official directives and seek shelter at the first signs of unrest. Avoid concentrations of security forces.

## ● **Medium risk: Deadly dengue fever outbreak reported nationwide**

Exercise caution for travel to areas across the country, including **Dhaka**, due to a surge in confirmed cases and fatalities amidst an ongoing dengue fever outbreak.

Health authorities have reported tens of thousands of cases of dengue fever nationwide since January. At least 1,692 fatalities were registered due to the outbreak as of late December; the country's death toll has crossed the 1,000 mark for the first time in history. September turned out to be the deadliest month of the outbreak this year with around 79,598 cases and 396 fatalities. Although dengue is endemic in Bangladesh, the current outbreak is markedly more severe, owing to an early spike in recorded cases compared to previous years. The spike is likely due to environmental factors conducive to mosquito breeding including heavier rainfall, high temperatures and high humidity. Accordingly, the density of mosquitoes and the number of hotspots are at the highest level in comparison to the last five years. While cases have been reported in areas across all divisions in the country, the most affected area has been **Dhaka city**. Other affected locations include **Chittagong division, Dhaka division** excluding Dhaka city and **Barisal division**. **Sylhet division** has reported the lowest number of cases so far.

Travellers are advised to take measures to prevent mosquito bites such as wearing long sleeves and pants, applying insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing, and using a bed net when sleeping in a room that is not screened or air-conditioned. Symptoms include a high fever, joint pain and headaches, although severe cases may cause significant falls in blood pressure and/or haemorrhaging, which can be fatal. People experiencing symptoms should seek medical attention immediately. Travellers should ensure they are up-to-date on routine vaccines before departure.

# Summary

---

## Overall ● Medium Risk

Bangladesh is a **Medium Risk** destination: exercise caution.

## Security ● Medium Risk

Medium Risk locations are not completely safe, but typically present predictable security risks. Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions.

## Covid ● Low Risk

Authorities instituted comprehensive shutdowns and curfews throughout 2020 which was later lifted by mid-2021 in most urban areas. The country's healthcare system is poorly-resourced and ill-equipped to handle a widespread outbreak. Authorities lifted most COVID-19-related domestic and entry restrictions. People may still be required to wear masks inside healthcare facilities.

## Political Instability ● Medium Risk

Strong party rivalries, frequent political clashes, infighting and an Islamist militancy all threaten Bangladesh's political stability. The country is governed as a parliamentary democracy, with the prime minister serving as the head of the government. Rivalries between the ruling Awami League (AL) party and the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have often resulted in protests and violence. Other issues like unemployment and corruption remain persistent threats to the government.

## Conflict ● Medium Risk

There have been sporadic instances of mostly low-level skirmishes between the Indian Border Security Force and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) along the **Bangladesh-India border**, especially in **Akhaura upazila, Brahmanbaria district**. However, an escalation of tensions to a full-scale conflict is unlikely as the two sides periodically engage in diplomacy to resolve issues. Clashes involving indigenous tribal members have also been pervasive in the **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region**.

## Terrorism ● Medium Risk

Bangladesh in the past witnessed a high level of religious extremism. Attacks on public places and targeted killings until 2018 were linked to international groups. While in recent years there have been no major terrorist attacks, some attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have occasionally targeted security forces in the country. Bangladesh's security and emergency services do not have sufficient personnel, equipment or training facilities to respond to a large-scale attack.

## Unrest ● Medium Risk

Strikes and demonstrations, as well as related violence, take place sporadically, fostered by political polarisation, low levels of socioeconomic development and rival territorial claims. Large-scale gatherings carry the potential risk of escalating to unrest. Protests are often related to social issues and are sometimes prone to violent escalations in cities including **Dhaka**, **Khulna**, **Chittagong** and **Sylhet**.

## Crime ● Medium Risk

Criminal activities are rampant across Bangladesh, with both petty crimes and some types of violent crime witnessed in varying degrees. Foreign nationals are sporadically targeted in opportunistic crimes for their perceived wealth.

## Natural and Environmental ● High Risk

Bangladesh is frequently affected by floods during periods of heavy rainfall and cyclones between April and October. Landslides are common in hilly areas. Infrastructure and emergency response to natural and environmental disasters are very poor outside **Dhaka**. Bangladesh also does not have an effective advance monitoring mechanism for floods and landslides.

## Local Travel ● High Risk

Travel in Bangladesh is marred by poor road conditions and traffic accidents are common. A variety of taxis and rental vehicles are available, but travellers should be selective in choosing to hire drivers due to the risk of being defrauded or robbed. Railways and ferry services have suffered safety problems and are frequently overcrowded. The safety of air travel in Bangladesh has also been called into question following a number of accidents in recent years.

## Health and Medical ● High Risk

The quality of healthcare services is poor throughout the country, particularly outside the capital **Dhaka**, and below international standards. A number of private clinics operating alongside government hospitals can cater to minor injuries and illnesses. However, many small clinics do not have licensed medical professionals, and therefore travellers should seek local advice to avoid such establishments.

# Political Overview : ● Medium Risk

---

In the December 2018 parliamentary elections, the AL party won 288 out of 300 parliamentary seats and incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was re-elected for a fourth term. The vote was marred by violent clashes between rival AL and BNP supporters, with the opposition alleging vote-rigging by the ruling party. The high levels of hostility were triggered by the AL-led government's refusal to appoint an impartial caretaker government to oversee the polls, as well as the jailing of dozens of opposition activists who participated in anti-government demonstrations in the weeks leading up to the elections. BNP supporters claimed that the AL-led government fabricated a false graft case against BNP leader Khaleda Zia to aid Hasina's victory.

The AL-led government continues to face challenges due to prevailing tensions between the ruling and opposition parties, as clashes between AL and BNP members sometimes occur in **urban areas** of the country. The instances of such clashes are likely to increase in the days leading up to the January 2024 general elections.

The AL-led government It is also faced with the critical task of reducing youth unemployment levels, accommodating the large number of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and tackling the rising costs of living. The issue of youth unemployment was a source of violent anti-government demonstrations in 2018, prompting the AL government to abolish a controversial quota system which previously reserved over 56 percent of the public sector jobs for former paramilitaries and various ethnic minorities. Prime Minister Hasina promised to create 15 million new jobs by 2023, increasing government funding for vocational training centres and higher education institutions. By March 2023, the unemployment rate actually came down to 3.6 percent compared to the previous 4.2 percent; however, the overall situation has not improved much as employment generation activities and the growth of domestic products have decreased significantly following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, a large number of Rohingya refugees currently settled in the country's **Cox's Bazar** are unlikely to return to Myanmar. Poor living conditions, limited job prospects and violence in and around refugee camps have put public pressure on the government to toughen its stance towards the refugees.

Prime Minister Hasina also promised to tackle high levels of corruption in the public sector, announcing plans to add more officers to the Anti-Corruption Commission and open new investigations. However, challenges such as a lack of operational

independence and increased bureaucratic control continue to plague the commission.

While Islamist militants' capabilities in the country have declined in recent years, affiliated groups retain a presence and continue to threaten political stability. Another threat stems from demonstrations by opposition Islamist political parties. Islamist political parties such as Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh and Jamaat-Shibir have demonstrated the ability to mobilise thousands of people to protest in favour of their policies, and the government has been criticised for failing to stand up to such shows of strength.

## **There are no recent incidents**

# Conflict : ● Medium Risk

---

**Border tensions:** Bangladesh is almost entirely surrounded by India and tensions can be high along this border. Sporadic skirmishes have occurred between Indian Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), especially in **Akhaura upazila, Brahmanbaria district**.

In order to prevent illegal immigration and the smuggling of cattle and drugs across the border, India began constructing a security fence along the 4,095km (2,545 miles) border with Bangladesh in 2018, which has resulted in additional security checkpoints at the border in **Mymensingh, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Sylhet** and **Chittagong** divisions. Bangladesh believes that India is in violation of an agreement by building the fence too close to the border. Nevertheless, Bangladesh and India are keen on preventing existing tensions from escalating to conflict and periodically engage in diplomatic talks to try and resolve the issue. Bangladesh's efforts to preserve its image as a long-time leader in international peacekeeping operations in the region also reduce the potential for conflict.

**Myanmar Refugee Crisis:** Over 860,000 Rohingya refugees remain in Bangladesh, mostly in camps in **Cox's Bazar district, Chittagong division**. Deteriorating living conditions, limited job prospects and related crime and violence at the camps have prompted the government to restrict the refugees' movements around leaving and entering the camps. Continued poor conditions might spark communal violence in border areas with many refugee camps.

**Chittagong Hill Tracts Insurgency:** A 20-year armed conflict between government forces and Shanti Bahini members, an armed wing of the dissident group Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) in the **Khagrachari, Rangamati** and **Bandarban** Hill districts, collectively known as the **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)**, ended with the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord. In the wake of this agreement, violence by insurgents reduced considerably in the region and most military forces also pulled out of the **CHT**.

Most of the provisions of the peace deal have been implemented in the **CHT**, including partial regional autonomy for the PCJSS. However, government control remains weak in the **CHT** with lax policing measures and reports of forced evictions, human rights abuses and discrimination against indigenous groups by Bengali settlers. Multiple indigenous tribes also demanded the implementation of land ownership reforms.

Failure to implement these reforms has led to killings and assaults among ethnic groups who seek to establish dominance. At least 22 people were killed in clashes between members of three rival groups, namely the United People's Democratic Front (Prasit), United People's Democratic Front (Democratic) and Jana Samhati Samiti, in **CHT** in 2018. The violent infighting is likely to continue in the long-term due to the government's continued failure to address issues related to the economic and social development of ethnic groups. In March 2023, authorities issued an indefinite travel ban for the **Bandarban district's Ruma, Rowangchhari and Thanchi** upazilas in the **CHT**. Travellers are still allowed to travel to tourist centres in **Meghla** and **Nilachal**.

**Strength of Military Forces:** Bangladesh suffered from a violent military history and the army had an important influence on Bangladeshi politics in the past. However, the current Awami League government has cordial relations with the military and they are unlikely to contribute to any sort of political instability in the country. The army has displayed a high degree of professionalism and Bangladesh has consistently made contributions to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions.

# Terrorism

---

**Islamist Terrorism:** Islamist terrorism, particularly in Bangladesh's main cities including **Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong, Sylhet** and **Rajshahi**, in the past was greatly exacerbated by weak state institutions and poor intelligence-gathering capabilities of security forces.

In the past decade, a wave of targeted killings by Islamist extremists and militant groups against minorities, secular bloggers, intellectuals and foreign nationals left at least 40 people dead nationwide. Police traced many of these killings to supporters and members of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB), the Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) and the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)-linked Ansar al Islam (AAI), the Islamic State (IS) and the AQIS.

The country's intelligence capabilities and effectiveness of anti-terrorism measures were brought into question when seven heavily armed Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB) militants executed a deadly attack which targeted mostly foreign nationals at the **Holey Artisan Bakery** in the **Gulshan-2 district** of **Dhaka**, in July 2016. Following the attack, security forces launched a wave of counter-terror raids and no major attacks have occurred since.

However, authorities in early 2019 admitted that over 50 Bangladeshis had travelled to Syria and Iraq to fight for the IS. Following the defeat and loss of territory suffered by IS in Syria and Iraq, there has been a movement of former IS fighters returning to Bangladesh. The group's ideology continues to retain influence and attract radicalised individuals in the country. There remains a risk of IS-inspired large-scale reprisal attacks, especially on foreign nationals and targets in Bangladesh. The most common form of attacks is those targeting individual members of ethnic and religious minorities, such as Shia Muslims, Baha'is, Christians or Hindus, and people identifying as LGBT. While most victims are Bangladeshi nationals, foreign nationals are also at risk of being targeted. In recent years, groups like JMB and IS have demonstrated the intent to carry out suicide bombings in Bangladesh. Other more common tactics employed by the IS and JMB include knife and gun attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices targeting security forces and civilians alike.

Between 2018 and 2020, a series of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks took place throughout Bangladesh; the motives for the attacks, which sometimes targeted security forces, were often unclear and local Islamist groups did not claim

responsibility for them. While no foreigners were targeted, travellers are advised to monitor local news for similar incidents.

Travellers in the country should keep a low profile. Avoid travelling on foot or alone, particularly after dark. Note that public transportation should also be avoided, as it has been targeted in the past.

**Response Preparedness:** In case of a serious terrorist attack, Bangladesh's emergency and other civil support services do not have adequate personnel to respond in a timely and efficient manner. Despite international assistance in working towards improved contingency planning and crisis management, Bangladesh's security services generally lack the capacity, appropriate equipment and training to react effectively.

## Recent incidents

04 December 2023 - 05 December 2023

### ● **Medium risk:** Fatalities reported from BSF shooting in Thakurgaon, Rangpur division

Local sources reported that at least two people were killed and another was allegedly injured due to firing by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in the Kathaldangi area in Gedura union, Haripur upazila, Thakurgaon district, Rangpur division, close to the border with India, on 4 December.

# Unrest : ● Medium Risk

---

**Demonstrations:** The BNP, AL and the AL's affiliates, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jubo League, regularly hold gatherings in urban areas. Demonstrations by Islamist activists, business owners, unionised workers and students are also frequent. Issue-specific protests can erupt on short notice and sometimes culminate in violence, with security forces using crowd control methods such as baton charges, tear gas or rubber bullets to contain demonstrations. In **Dhaka**, protest hotspots include the **Shahbag Intersection, Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka University, National Press Club**, as well as the vicinity of major highways and establishments in **Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet** and other cities. Travellers should also note that authorities sometimes block mobile phone communications during protests. In rural areas, clashes between local landowners are frequent and will draw police intervention.

**Strikes:** Hartals ('strikes') are sometimes used by opposition activists, workers' unions and trade associations as a means to advance their interests. These strikes can paralyse the country, stranding passengers at transit hubs, including at **Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC/VGHS)**, and at bus stops, highways and railway stations in urban areas nationwide. Strikes can also quickly turn violent and lead to clashes. Incidents of arson, violence and vandalism can suddenly break out during these confrontations. Travellers are recommended to monitor local news outlets for upcoming strikes or protests.

**Ethnic Unrest:** There are sporadic reports of clashes between local Bangladeshis and Rohingya refugees in locations near **Rohingya refugee camps** in the **Teknaf, Kutupalong, Ukhia** and **Ramu areas** of the **Cox's Bazar district, Chittagong division**. Violent clashes between Hindu and Muslim community members have also occurred periodically in **Rangpur** and **Khulna** divisions during religious festivals like Eid and Durga Puja.

## Recent incidents

22 December 2023 - 23 December 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Islami Andolan Bangladesh party supporters to rally in Dhaka on 22 December

The Islami Andolan Bangladesh party called on supporters to rally at the North Gate of Baitul Mukarrom National Mosque in Dhaka following afternoon prayers on 22 December to demand the cancellation of the upcoming election and a new education curriculum.

21 December 2023 - 22 December 2023

- **Moderate risk:** AL campaign rallies to be held in several areas on 21 December

Local reports indicated that campaign rallies will be organised by the ruling Awami League (AL) party in Panchagarh and Lalmonirhat in Rangpur division, Natore and Pabna in Rajshahi division and Khagrachhari in Chittagong division from 15:00 local time (09:00 GMT) on 21 December; Prime Minister Hasina will address the rallies virtually. Further details were not available.

20 December 2023 - 21 December 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Tight security for campaign rally in Sylhet on 20 December

Heightened security measures, including increased police patrols, are expected across Sylhet, Sylhet division, particularly in the vicinity of the Sylhet Government Alia Madrasa, Hazrat Shahjalal shrine and Hazrat Shah Paran shrine, on 20 December, due to an election rally addressed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

19 December 2023 - 20 December 2023

- **Medium risk:** Deadly clash over election campaign reported in Sirta, Mymensingh division

Local sources reported that at least one person was killed after a clash erupted between locals over the management of the election campaign of an independent candidate in Konapara, Sirta union, Mymensingh Sadar upazila, Mymensingh division, late on 19 December. Further details were not immediately available.

# Crime : ● Medium Risk

---

**Petty Crime:** Petty crimes like pickpocketing, snatching and robbery are highest in low-income residential districts, congested commercial areas, and areas frequented by tourists in urban centres, particularly **Dhaka**. Transport hubs like airports and stations, and public transport like rickshaws, taxis, ferries and long-distance buses are all targets. Passport theft has also been reported at **Dhaka (DAC/VGHS)** and **Sylhet (ZYL/VGSY) airports**. **The Diplomatic Enclave** in **Dhaka** has seen a recent increase in robberies, with the majority of victims being robbed while travelling by rickshaw. Foreigners may be targeted due to their perceived wealth.

Beware of your surroundings, do not leave your belongings unattended and exercise general personal safety for travel. Only carry what is needed, do not flash expensive valuables or large sums of money, and keep cash, identification and mobile phones in front pockets, or in a zipped or concealed pocket or pouch rather than in a bag. Secure belongings when using public transport or when frequenting markets and other crowded public areas; secure bags diagonally across the body against the chest, keep bags within sight and away from the street. Refrain from using mobile phones or laptops in congested public places; avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Avoid walking in poorly lit and isolated areas. Stay in groups. Reject rides or drinks from strangers and never leave drinks unattended. Exercise extreme caution when purchasing and consuming alcohol in public venues. Do not accept pamphlets in the street or shopping centres; these could be impregnated with potent and disorienting drugs, which permeate the skin. If you start to feel unwell, tell staff or close friends and do not leave the venue alone or with strangers. Shout to attract attention, if needed.

**Violent Crime:** Violent crimes such as armed robbery can occur in cities like **Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Feni, and Khulna**; while there are no indications of foreigners being specifically targeted in such attacks, it cannot be ruled out. The **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)** region was for years the site of kidnappings and arms and narcotics smuggling, although the situation has slightly improved. Deadly gunfights between security forces and suspected rebels and miscreants, as well as ethnic clashes, are still reported periodically. Additionally, acid attacks are common in Bangladesh; however, local women are usually the victims and foreigners are not directly targeted.

Commonsense measures are best kept to ensure against becoming the victim of a violent crime. Travellers are advised to remain vigilant at all times and exercise general

personal safety for travel: avoid walking alone at night, do not venture down roads with poor lighting and few access points. Be careful when using taxis and public transport and plot route bypasses around rowdy crowds. Seek local advice for areas to avoid. If you are held-up by an armed robber do not become confrontational as any resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

**Organised Crime and Gangs:** Organised crime, particularly drug-related activities, are prevalent in some parts of the country. Police have in the past frequently engaged in deadly clashes with suspected drug traders in areas of **Dhaka division** and in **Chittagong division's Cox's Bazar district**, particularly around Rohingya refugee camps; methamphetamine pills, locally known as 'yaba' were often seized in large quantities. Following a government crackdown on drug crimes, such incidents have significantly reduced over the past few years. Foreigners are not usually targeted in drug-related attacks.

Violence is often contained within inter-gang rivalries, though bystanders may be caught up in drive-by shootings, street shootings and armed or arson attacks. Avoid the epicentres of criminal activities, which are often located on the outskirts of urban areas. Seek local advice on specific areas to avoid. Restrict travel in unfamiliar areas to daylight hours. Visitors should avoid association with members of any groups or individuals they suspect of being involved in such activities.

**Vehicle Crime:** Vehicle crimes like car theft and carjacking are reported sporadically in and around urban areas including **Dhaka, Gazipur, Savar, Narayanganj, Narsingdi** and **Cumilla**. These crimes are mostly carried out by syndicate groups; the members often use distraction as a method to execute car thefts.

**Theft:** A common tactic for confrontational theft is for thieves to smash a car window or pull open passenger doors when cars are stopped at traffic lights, before stealing items such as bags, GPS, radios, phones or wallets. Motorists may also be signalled to stop by the occupants of another car pointing at their tyre and indicating a problem. Alternatively thieves may force victims out of their vehicle at knife or gunpoint in order to steal the vehicle. Avoid driving at night and exercise caution when stopped at traffic lights or in tunnels. Never stop at the indication of another driver. If you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station or public area. Stop at the nearest town or service station if you think you may have a genuine problem with your vehicle.

**Carjacking:** Avoid leaving or returning to your place of work or residence at the same time every day. Vehicles equipped with a coded key or a key fob tend to be increasingly targeted as they make it easier to hijack with jamming devices. Hijackers

also tend to stage breakdowns, flagging victims for assistance. Two cars are often used to box the victim in and force them to stop. Leave a safe distance between yourself and the car in front of you at traffic stops, limiting speed as much as possible to avoid stopping in order to keep the vehicle moving and gain time before the light turns green. Hijackers are often armed and extremely willing to use deadly force so resistance is discouraged. Stay calm and move slowly and exit your vehicle avoiding eye contact with the assailants. Keep your hands in clear sight at all times.

**Fraud and Scams:** Local taxis may tend to overcharge passengers, especially foreigners, in areas where app-based cab services are unavailable. Scammers may also be present in the vicinity of ATMs in urban areas; they approach unsuspecting customers and offer to help out with their transactions.

**Unlicensed Taxis:** Travellers are advised to use only licensed taxis, as unlicensed taxis may overcharge and drivers are not regulated or may be colluded. Always negotiate or confirm the fare before setting off. Consider having a hotel shuttle or registered chauffeur meet you at the airport upon arrival, particularly if arriving after dark. Avoid hailing taxis off the street and opt for private, non-shared taxis; ensure the taxi is empty in the back before getting into the vehicle. If you have to put luggage in the boot, pay the driver after getting it back. If you are tricked, write down the taxi's licence plate and call the police. Ride-share apps may provide a safe alternative.

**ATM fraud:** Always refuse unsolicited assistance while at an ATM, and avoid ATMs other than at malls and banks. Keep a 24-hour emergency number for ATM cards on hand to prevent illegal withdrawals from the account if such incidences occur.

**Kidnapping:** Abductions by criminal gangs have periodically targeted wealthy businessmen in parts of **Dhaka** in the past, while foreign aid workers and Christian missionaries have also been targeted in kidnap-for-ransom activities in remote parts of **Sylhet, Rajshahi** and **Chittagong divisions**. Kidnappers may also target journalists and ethnic minorities.

Travellers should remain aware of their surroundings and follow the latest advisories for their destination. Maintain communications and your itinerary with local contacts, authorities or embassy staff, especially in locations with a higher risk of kidnapping. Consider a local guide or security escort for the highest risk locations.

## Recent incidents

21 December 2023 - 22 December 2023

- **Medium risk:** Unidentified assailants target Rohingya men in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong division

At least two Rohingya men were shot dead by unidentified miscreants in two separate incidents in Ukhiya upazila, Cox's Bazar district, Chittagong division, during early morning hours local time on 21 December, reportedly over establishing dominance at a refugee camp. Additional security forces were deployed in the area.

# Law

---

Bangladesh's legal system is based on English common law, although Islamic family law is applied through the regular court system. Islamic practices and beliefs are closely adhered to in the country's customs, laws and regulations.

Although the higher judiciary is politically independent, the lower judiciary is under executive control. The court system is widely considered corrupt, with long delays to many cases; there is a very low degree of confidence in the system. The death penalty is applicable for serious crimes.

# Corruption

---

**Corruption:** Some of the institutional departments are considered to be corrupt. However, a visitor is only likely to come into contact with the police, who may solicit bribes or demand payment for bogus fines. While foreign visitors may experience low-level bribery, residents are more likely to be affected. The police may extort bribes for unfounded arrests, and deaths in police custody are high, particularly in Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) custody. Visitors to police stations should be accompanied to mitigate the risk of officials abusing power.

There is a high chance that businesses may face bribery in Bangladesh, as corruption is endemic in public life. While the issue has been at the forefront of national political discussion, there has been a lack of will on all sides to effectively address the problem, undermining governance and civil institutions, as well as hindering development. Graft charges filed against former public officials hint at positive changes.

# Security Services

---

**Security Services:** The Bangladesh Police, including the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), are responsible for internal law and order. The RAB, formed from members of the police, army and the paramilitary force the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), formerly known as the Bangladesh Rifles, was created to counter a rising crime rate and has become widely feared. Although more disciplined and better equipped and trained than the regular police, the 12,500-strong RAB has a reputation for brutality.

The majority of local police tend to lack basic resources and funding. Police stations are left understaffed and without the necessary technology and office resources to fully investigate major crimes. However, police are generally responsive when aiding foreign nationals who fall victim to a crime. A specialised unit known as 'Tourism Police' are operational across several districts in the country. Tourists may also be assisted regarding various facilities through an app called 'Hello Tourist'.

The lower ranks of Bangladesh security services, the local constabulary, lack effective training and equipment. Accounting for the vast majority of security personnel, they are stretched thin by high levels of criminality and are poorly paid. They are widely perceived as corrupt and subject to political interference. The police are active across the country; however, a higher concentration is seen in urban centres, mainly **Dhaka**.

Low levels of pay and training within the police force contribute to a culture of corruption, impunity and abuse of power. Police are reported to use excessive force against protestors and force victims to retract statements in cases of enforced disappearances. Prison conditions are dire and torture of prisoners has been reported. There have been complaints that police do not respond effectively to domestic abuse or to acid attacks, the victims of which are mostly young women, often attacked by spurned young men. These attitudes towards violence against women mean that police stations are unlikely to be adequately equipped to deal with complaints of sexual assault or rape.

# Natural Risks : ● High Risk

---

Bangladesh is frequently affected by floods during periods of heavy rainfall and cyclones between April and October. Landslides are common in hilly areas. Infrastructure and emergency response to natural and environmental disasters are very poor outside **Dhaka**. Bangladesh also does not have an effective advance monitoring mechanism for floods and landslides.

## Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor drainage systems in the affected area.

Floods are common across the country, including **Dhaka**, during periods of monsoon rainfall between March and September. Floods in Bangladesh have been severe in recent years due to rising sea levels driven by climate change. The worst-affected areas during floods are usually hilly regions with poor infrastructure and limited emergency services, namely **Chittagong, Sylhet, Mymensingh** and **Rajshahi divisions**. Floods often disrupt overland travel as well as ferry services. Boats and ferries sometimes get overloaded and capsize as thousands of people try to evacuate flooded areas at the same time. In May 2022, heavy floods caused by monsoon rains affected the **Sylhet** and **Sunamganj** regions, leaving 132 people dead and many more without shelter or food. Floods can also increase the risk of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue and chikungunya.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

## Hurricanes/Typhoons/Tropical Cyclones

A cyclone/typhoon/hurricane is essentially a large mass of air that spirals around a low-pressure centre. It is an organised collection of thunderstorms embedded in a swirling mass of air. This mass of air is called a cyclone if it forms in the Indian or South Pacific oceans, a typhoon if formed in the West Pacific Ocean and a hurricane if formed in the East Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Cyclones/typhoons/hurricanes normally bring gale-force winds, heavy rainfall and high tides, with the potential of causing significant or destructive damage and widespread travel disruptions.

Tropical cyclones usually affect Bangladesh between May and September and have the potential to cause widespread air, overland and sea travel disruptions. Operations at ports of **Mongla, Chittagong and Payra** are often halted during tropical cyclones. In October 2022, at least 24 people were killed and 10,000 homes were damaged across the southern regions after Cyclone Sitrang hit the country; several roads remained impassable for at least a month due to damages sustained during the storm.

Follow local radio or television broadcasts for information and evacuation instructions. If not under an area with mandatory evacuation orders, remain indoors. Locate and secure important documentation, including passports, photo identification, travel permits and any indispensable personal effects. Be advised that the calm 'eye' is deceptive and should by no means be interpreted as a sign that the storm has passed. The second winds are likely to be worse and may destroy trees and buildings damaged in the first pass. If caught in a region hit by a cyclone/typhoon/hurricane, remain indoors until the storm passes. If there is a need to move to an evacuation centre, evacuate in a calm manner and ensure you carry important personal identification. Avoid all low-lying coastal areas due to storm surges. Confirm the viability of overland travel routes due to the risk of flooding. Air and sea travel are also likely to be impacted. Anticipate disruptions to power, communications and other essential services.

## Earthquakes

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long period. Initial mild shaking may worsen and become extremely violent within a matter

of seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake.

Bangladesh is located in an active seismic zone. The country's central region, particularly **Dhaka** is prone to occasional earthquakes. The poor quality of infrastructure means that even a relatively moderate tremor can damage roads and buildings with disruptions likely to last for prolonged periods.

When shaking begins, drop to the ground and take cover under, and hold on to, a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a heavy desk or table that can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you're not near a strong piece of furniture, crouch down and protect your head and face in an inner corner of a building; only stand in a doorway if you know it is strongly supported. Stay away from windows or glass panels. Most deaths and injuries in an earthquake are caused by collapsing building materials and heavy falling objects. Stay indoors until the tremors stop and you are sure it is safe to exit. Avoid all areas in the vicinity of outer walls and doorways, as these are most prone to falling debris. In a high-rise building, the electricity may go out and the sprinkler systems may come on. Do not use the elevators. If the lights go out, avoid using candles, matches or lighters during or after the earthquake; if there is a gas leak, an explosion could result. If outdoors, move to an open space away from buildings, electric poles and street lights which are prone to collapse. Do not travel on roads and bridges which may have been damaged by the earthquake. Be prepared for secondary earth movements that follow the initial earthquake; some of these may be large enough to cause additional damage or bring down weakened structures.

## **Landslides/Mudslides**

Sometimes referred to as debris flows, mudflows, lahars or debris avalanches, landslides/mudslides are a form of mass soil movement that tends to flow in channels in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth and debris, typically following heavy rainfall.

Landslides are common during the rainy season in hilly regions where soil is loose, namely **Chittagong, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions**. Landslides can often prove to be fatal or strand visitors for several days, especially if they occur on or near main roads. Rescue and clearing operations take several days, as some of these mountainous areas are difficult for emergency services personnel to reach.

Follow local news updates in landslide prone areas for warnings about intense storms and rainfall. If landslide or debris flow danger is imminent, quickly move away from the path of the slide. Seek shelter on the nearest high ground in a direction away from the path. If rocks and debris are approaching, run for the nearest shelter and take cover (if possible, under a desk, table or other piece of sturdy furniture that can provide you with air space if the building collapses). Anticipate disruptions to overland travel in areas affected by landslides. Confirm the viability of intended overland travel routes before departure and remain alert for landslide warning signs including cracks in the soil or the faint rumbling sound of an approaching landslide or debris flow.

## Dangerous wildlife

Rabid stray dogs are common across the country, including on main roads in **Dhaka**, **Chittagong** and other major cities. Authorities do not have effective control measures to deal with rabid dogs. Venomous and dangerous snakes like pythons and king cobras are also found across **Dhaka**, **Chittagong** and **Rajshahi divisions**. While anti-venom is available, medical personnel are slow in responding to most emergency cases of venomous animal bites, including in urban localities.

Exercise caution when travelling to regions with dangerous wildlife and familiarise yourself with local hazardous animals before departure. Avoid close proximity with wild animals. Ensure that you are vaccinated against rabies in the event of being bitten by a rabid animal. Seek immediate medical help if you are bitten.

## Recent incidents

12 December 2023 - 13 December 2023

### ● **Medium risk: Dense fog triggers travel disruptions in Dhaka and Chittagong's Haimchar**

Local sources reported that at least 10 flights were diverted from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC/VGHS) between 00:00-08:00 local time (18:00-02:00 GMT), due to low visibility conditions caused by dense fog. Separately, at least one passenger was killed and several others were injured after two ferries collided in the Char Bhairabi area in Haimchar, Chittagong division, on the Meghna River, due to heavy fog.

07 December 2023 - 08 December 2023

- **Moderate risk: Public transport services disrupted in Dhaka amid heavy rainfall**

Local sources indicated that public transport services were disrupted and traffic was congested in several areas in and around Dhaka during morning hours local time, due to torrential rainfall which was expected to continue throughout the day. Heavy rainfall was also reported in Jessore, Khulna division.

06 December 2023 - 07 December 2023

- **Moderate risk: Ship operations suspended on Teknaf-Saint Martin route until further notice - Update**

Tourist ships operations on the Teknaf-Saint Martin Island's route in Cox's Bazaar, Chittagong division, were suspended since morning hours local time until further notice due to rough sea waters and adverse weather conditions triggered by the Severe Cyclonic Storm Michaung. Approximately 300 tourists were stranded on the island due to the suspension. The maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra were advised to hoist cautionary signal No. three.

04 December 2023 - 06 December 2023

- **Moderate risk: Weather officials advise cautionary signal two due to Severe Cyclonic Storm Michaung - Update**

Meteorological officials advised Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra ports to hoist a distant cautionary signal no. two, due to Severe Cyclonic Storm Michaung that was located about 1,390km (864 miles) southwest of Mongla port with maximum sustained winds of around 90kph (56 mph), late on 4 December. All vessels over North Bay and deep sea of Bay of Bengal were advised to remain close to the coast.

# Health and Medical: ● High Risk

---

## Overview

The quality of healthcare services is poor throughout the country, particularly outside the capital **Dhaka**, and below international standards. A number of private clinics operating alongside government hospitals can cater to minor injuries and illnesses. However, many small clinics do not have licensed medical professionals, and therefore travellers should seek local advice to avoid such establishments.

## Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

## Outbreaks and Other Diseases

### Malaria

#### Areas with Malaria:

- Districts of Chittagong Hill Tract (Bandarban, Khagrachari, and Rangamati); and the following districts: Chattogram (Chittagong) and Cox's Bazar (in Chattogram [Chittagong] Division); Mymensingh, Netrakona, and Sherpur (in Mymensingh Division); Kurigram (in Rangpur Division); Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, and Sylhet (in Sylhet Division)
- No malaria transmission in Dhaka (the capital)

#### Recommended chemoprophylaxis:

- Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, tafenoquine

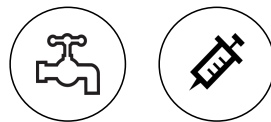
## Yellow Fever

There is no risk of Yellow Fever infection.

## Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

**Note:** Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines as well as Yellow Fever vaccine are based on guidelines from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yellow Book 2024. All other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

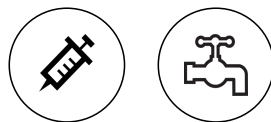
### Routine vaccines



Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

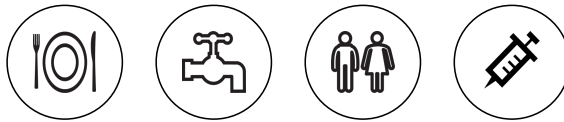
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

### COVID-19



All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

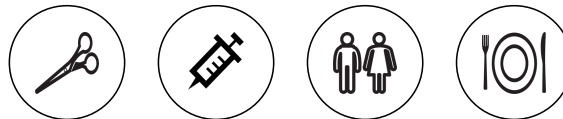
## Cholera



Areas of active cholera transmission are localized to the divisions of Chittagong (last case reported 6-9 months ago) and Dhaka (last case reported 9-12 months ago) in Bangladesh. Cholera is rare in travellers. Certain factors may increase the risk of getting cholera or having severe disease. Avoiding unsafe food and water and washing your hands can also help prevent cholera.

Vaccination may be considered for children and adults who are traveling to areas of active cholera transmission.

## Hepatitis A



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to Bangladesh.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

## Hepatitis B



Recommended for unvaccinated travellers younger than 60 years old traveling to Bangladesh. Unvaccinated travellers 60 years and older may get vaccinated before traveling to Bangladesh.

## Japanese Encephalitis



Recommended for travellers who

- Are moving to an area with Japanese encephalitis to live
- Spend long periods of time, such as a month or more, in areas with Japanese encephalitis
- Frequently travel to areas with Japanese encephalitis

Consider vaccination for travellers

- Spending less than a month in areas with Japanese encephalitis but will be doing activities that increase risk of infection, such as visiting rural areas, hiking or camping, or staying in places without air conditioning, screens, or bed nets
- Going to areas with Japanese encephalitis who are uncertain of their activities or how long they will be there

Not recommended for travellers planning short-term travel to urban areas or travel to areas with no clear Japanese encephalitis season.

## Malaria



CDC recommends that travellers going to certain areas of Bangladesh take prescription medicine to prevent malaria. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking this medicine multiple days before your trip, as well as during and after your trip. Talk to your doctor about which malaria medication you should take.

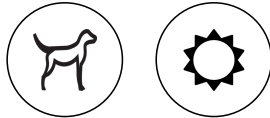
Find country-specific information about malaria.

## Measles



Infants 6 to 11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

## Rabies



Rabid dogs are commonly found in Bangladesh. However, if you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in Bangladesh, rabies treatment is often available.

Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.

Travellers more likely to encounter rabid animals include

- Campers, adventure travellers, or cave explorers (spelunkers)
- Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens
- Visitors to rural areas

Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children traveling to Bangladesh.

## Typhoid



Recommended for most travellers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.

## Required documentation

### Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

Required for travellers one year and older arriving from countries with risk for YF virus transmission; this includes airport transits or layovers in countries with risk for YF virus transmission.

### Other entry requirements:

None

**Note:** Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

## While you are there

### Emergency services

There is no functioning emergency medical care system in Bangladesh, with only a few ambulances in **Dhaka** and **Chittagong**. Ambulance response times are very slow, often delayed by traffic congestion even in urban localities. Outside of Dhaka, ambulance services are extremely unreliable. No nationwide emergency medical telephone number is in place. Travellers are recommended to familiarise themselves with where the nearest hospital is located from their place of residence and the telephone number for the hospital's ambulance service.

### Evacuation

In the event of severe and life-threatening injury or illness, medical evacuation will be required.

### Routine care

Medical infrastructure is poor throughout the country, including in public hospitals in the capital **Dhaka**. Infrastructure suffers from a lack of hospital beds, obsolete technology and shortages of staff and basic supplies. Routine tests and X-rays are unreliable. The levels of expertise and professionalism are also low, particularly in

government hospitals. Few experienced and reliable medical specialists who are proficient in English are available in private hospitals and clinics in **Dhaka**. Outside the capital, quality healthcare services are extremely limited.

## Medicine

Visitors are strongly advised to take their own prescription medication, since prescription medication can be difficult to obtain and may be counterfeit and substandard. In addition, travellers are advised to carry their prescription scripts and a letter from a medical doctor explaining the need for the medication and justifying the quantities needed.

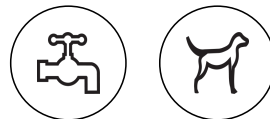
## Payment

Up-front or cash payments may be required prior to treatment, even for individuals with medical insurance. Whenever possible, check with medical providers for payment requirements prior to treatment

## Ailments

---

### Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)



There have been a number of bird flu outbreaks throughout Bangladesh and the country remains at risk of further instances.

*Avian influenza is a class of viral infections, including H5N1 and H7N9, which can be transmitted through contact with wild or domesticated birds. Symptoms are flu-like, and include fever, muscle aches, coughing, as well pneumonia and – in severe cases – respiratory failure. Treatment includes a course of antivirals.*

### Cholera



In the past, outbreaks were reported in rural areas of **Bogra** and **Kishorganj** districts. No further outbreaks have been reported in recent years, but visitors should remain aware of the possibility.

*Cholera is a bacterial infection transmitted through contact with infected food or water – usually by infected faeces – and is most prevalent in areas with poor sanitary standards. Symptoms include heavy, watery diarrhoea, vomiting and muscle cramps. If left untreated, cholera can rapidly become fatal. Cholera can be treated with a course of rehydration and antibiotics.*

## Dengue Fever



The World Health Organization (WHO) categorizes Bangladesh as a "category B" dengue country, suggesting that cyclical epidemics are becoming more frequent and that the disease is extending its geographical range in the country.

*Dengue fever is a viral infection, transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, which is most active during early morning and late afternoon hours and is commonly found in urban areas. Symptoms include a high fever, joint pain and headaches, although severe cases may cause significant falls in blood pressure and/or haemorrhaging, which can be fatal. There are no vaccines or treatments for dengue fever.*

## Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E)



*Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The three main variations (A, B and C) are caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses, but are transmitted by different means.*

## Japanese Encephalitis (JE)



*Japanese encephalitis (JE) is a viral infection transmitted by the Culex mosquito and is most prevalent in rural areas. In the majority of cases JE are asymptomatic; where symptoms occur, they include fever, fatigue, neurological disorders, vomiting and headaches. JE has a fatality rate of 20-30 percent, and survivors are at high risk of developing long-term neurological or psychological disorders. There is no treatment for JE beyond supportive hospital care.*

## Leishmaniasis



Bangladesh is one of several South Asian countries to have seen a jump in the number of leishmaniasis cases.

*Leishmaniasis is a parasitic infection transmitted by the bite of sand flies, which are most active during early morning and late evening hours. Symptoms of cutaneous leishmaniasis include swollen glands and sores; symptoms of visceral leishmaniasis include fever, swelling of the liver or spleen and weight loss. Leishmaniasis can be treated with a course of Amphotericin B, an antifungal.*

## Malaria



Malarial risk exists throughout the year in the whole country, including urban areas such as Dhaka and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The northeast and southeast parts of the country are the regions most impacted by malaria epidemics.

*Malaria is a serious parasitic infection, transmitted by the bite of the Anopheles mosquito. Symptoms can be flu-like and include a high fever, joint pain, anaemia, chills and headaches; if left untreated, symptoms can quickly complicate and*

*become life-threatening. While pre-departure courses of anti-malarial prophylactics are available, these do not guarantee immunity to malaria. Caught early, malaria can be treated easily with a range of anti-malarial medications.*

---

## Meningococcal Meningitis



In the past, outbreaks of meningococcal meningitis have been reported from the CHT; it is believed that the outbreak originally spread from the neighbouring state of Mizoram in India. No further outbreaks have been reported in recent years, but visitors should remain aware of the possibility.

*Meningococcal meningitis is a serious bacterial infection, transmitted via the coughing and sneezing of infected persons and is particularly prevalent during the dry season. Symptoms include a high fever, neck stiffness, severe headaches, a rash, nausea and confusion. The onset of symptoms can be rapid, occurring within hours of infection. The disease can be treated with a wide range of antibiotics. Left untreated, meningococcal meningitis has a fatality rate approaching 50 percent; survivors may experience serious complications.*

---

## Polio

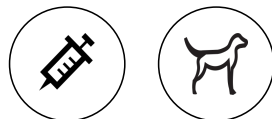


Polio has been eradicated in Bangladesh in recent years, but visitors should be aware of the risk in case of a resurgence of cases.

*Polio is an acute viral infection, transmitted via infected faecal matter, usually in contaminated food or water supplies. In most cases poliovirus is asymptomatic; in cases where symptoms are present, they can range from the mild – including a high fever, joint pain, nausea and headaches – to the severe, resulting in paralysis. There is no treatment for polio after infection.*

---

## Rabies



Over 2,000 human rabies deaths occur every year. Despite the fact that rabies is rare among tourists, the risk remains.

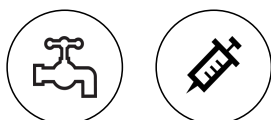
*Rabies is a serious viral infection, transmitted through close contact with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches or licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). Travellers who suspect they may have come into contact with a rabies-infected animal should seek immediate emergency attention: post-exposure treatment has a high success rate if administered early. Late-stage rabies (when symptoms begin to occur) is untreatable and fatal.*

## Traveller's diarrhoea (TD)



*Traveller's diarrhoea (TD) is a catch-all term for a number of minor or moderate bacterial, viral and parasitic infections, generally transmitted through infected food or water. In the majority of cases antibiotics or anti-diarrhoeal medication is unnecessary; travellers experiencing TD should ensure that they remain hydrated and well rested until their symptoms dissipate. Most cases of TD last less than three days; if diarrhoea continues for longer periods, travellers should consider consulting a medical professional.*

## Tuberculosis (TB)

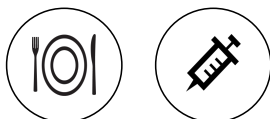


Bangladesh is in the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) highest risk category for tuberculosis, with more than 100 cases per 100,000 head of the population and an estimated 300,000 new cases and 70,000 deaths per year. Risk is highest in crowded urban areas such as Dhaka and Chittagong, and particularly the congested or crowded conditions found on public transport and in markets.

*Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection transmitted via the coughing and sneezing of infected persons. Symptoms – which may take years to develop if a person has latent TB – include fever, night sweats, chest pain, coughing up blood, weight loss and fatigue. TB can be treated with a course of antibiotics; the length of treatment is significantly longer once the disease becomes active and is no longer latent.*

---

## Typhoid



The incidence of the disease is highest in urban slum areas.

*Typhoid is a highly contagious bacterial infection, transmitted by the ingestion of food and water contaminated with infected faeces. Symptoms include a high temperature, a rash made up of small red spots, headaches, stomach pain and diarrhoea; serious complications, including internal bleeding and becoming comatose, are possible. While a typhoid vaccine is available, it does not guarantee immunity.*

---

## Nipah Virus (NiV)



The disease, transmitted via fruits or animals contaminated by infected bats and bugs, is commonly found in Rangpur division, especially in the Thakurgaon district and in some cases has proven to be fatal. Symptoms include high fever, breathing issues and headaches which sometimes lead to a coma and usually occur within 14 days of infection. There is currently no vaccine available for Nipah virus.

*Nipah Virus (NiV) is a viral infection transmitted through direct contact with infected persons, pigs or bats. Symptoms include fever, drowsiness, headaches and confusion, rapidly escalating to coma. NiV can be fatal and may reoccur in survivors years after the original infection. There is no treatment for NiV, beyond supportive hospital care.*

## Recent incidents

10 December 2023 - 12 December 2023

- **Medium risk: Nipah virus cases reported across the country - Update**

Updated reports indicated that at least 14 Nipah virus cases, which includes 10 related fatalities, were recorded across the country as of 10 December since the start of the year, marking the highest death toll in the last seven years. Further details were not yet available.

27 November 2023 - 29 November 2023

- **Medium risk: Fatalities increase from dengue outbreak across the country - Update**

Updated reports indicated that authorities recorded at least 309,087 dengue fever cases and 1,606 related fatalities nationwide as of 27 November since the start of the year; of the 3,493 hospitalised dengue patients reported nationwide, around 1,011 were registered in Dhaka.

15 November 2023 - 17 November 2023

- **Medium risk: Dengue-related deaths continue to rise nationwide - Update**

Updated reports indicated that authorities recorded at least 296,665 dengue fever cases and 1,520 related fatalities nationwide as of 15 November since the start of the year; of the 5,775 hospitalised dengue patients reported nationwide, around 1,507 were registered in Dhaka.

05 November 2023 - 07 November 2023

● **Medium risk:** Fatalities continue to rise amid dengue outbreak across the country - Update

Updated reports indicated that authorities recorded at least 279,904 dengue fever cases and 1,408 related fatalities nationwide as of 5 November since the start of the year; of the 6,704 hospitalised dengue patients reported nationwide, around 1,815 were registered in Dhaka.

# Covid-19: ● Low Risk

---

## Summary

Authorities instituted comprehensive shutdowns and curfews throughout 2020 which was later lifted by mid-2021 in most urban areas. The country's healthcare system is poorly-resourced and ill-equipped to handle a widespread outbreak. Authorities lifted most COVID-19-related domestic and entry restrictions. People may still be required to wear masks inside healthcare facilities.

**What is the current nationwide Policy?:** Open

**Policy starts:** 05 April  
2021

**Policy ends:** indef

**Policy explanation:**

Authorities lifted most COVID-19-related domestic and entry restrictions.

**Policy source:** <https://corona.gov.bd/>

**Last update:** 02 November 2023

---

## Infection

**Infection Level:** Moderate

**Infection rate:** 0.03 cases per 100k in the last 14  
days

**As of date:** 09 November 2023

**Hotspots:** -

---



## International Travel

### International Flights

**Is there a ban on international commercial flights?** No

**Through what date?** indef

#### **Flight Ban Explanation:**

National Carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has resumed direct flights with select destinations including Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Kuwait, Thailand and Saudi Arabia. Flights under an 'air bubble' arrangement also resumed between India and Bangladesh, following a prolonged suspension.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines resumed flights between **Bangladesh's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC/VGHS)** in Dhaka and **China's Kunming Changshui International Airport (KMG/ZPPP)** in Yunnan province and **Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (CAN/ZGGG)** in Guangdong province from mid-August, after receiving approval from Chinese authorities.

There are no capacity restrictions on carrying passengers for any type of aircraft.

Etihad Airways, which is the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, suspended flights to Hazrat Shahjalal Airport (DAC/VGHS) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 29 October until further notice due to commercial reasons.

**Last Update:** 21 November 2023

---

### Entry and Borders

**Is there a ban on entry for any travellers?** No

**Through what date?** indef

## Travellers from where are banned?

**Land border:** Open

**Maritime border:** Open

### Entry Rules Explanation:

Effective 25 May, travellers from all countries are allowed entry irrespective of their origin, vaccination status or purpose of travel.

Authorities resumed India-Bangladesh international train services between Kolkata and New Jalpaiguri (NJP) in West Bengal state, India, and Dhaka and Khulna in Bangladesh, namely the Kolkata-Dhaka Maitree Express, Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express and NJP-Dhaka Mitali Express.

**Entry Rules:** <http://caab.gov.bd/circul/AT%20Circular%20FSR-01-2023%20may26.pdf>

**Last Update:**

---

## Testing

**Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test** No

**When?**

**Is it mandatory or optional?**

**Test Type:**

**Minimum age requirement:**

**Pre-travel test validity, in hours:**

**After arrival test days:**

**Testing Explanation:**

**Testing Rules:** -

**Last Update:** 21 November 2023

---

## Health and Travel Documentations

**Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation?** No

**Documentation Explanation:**

**Last Update:** 02 November 2023

---

## Tracing App

**Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving?** No

**Tracing App Explanation:**

**Last Update:** 21 November 2023

---

## Quarantine on Arrival

**Who needs to quarantine on arrival** Some travellers

**Travellers from where need to quarantine?**

**How many days is quarantine?** 7

**Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government?** Gov

**Quarantine Explanation:**

Inbound travellers are no longer required to undergo any test for COVID-19, effective from 25 May.

**Quarantine Rules:** <http://caab.gov.bd/circul/FSR%2001-2022.pdf>

**Last Update:** 2023-11-21

---

## Exit

**Is there a ban on exit for any travellers?** No

**Are there special requirements to exit?** No

**Exit Requirements Explanation:**

**Last Update:** 21 November 2023

---

## Vaccination

**Percent vaccinated with at least one dose:** 91.994 as of 18 Oct 2023

**Percent fully vaccinated:** 83.06 as of 29 Oct 2023

**Is vaccination mandatory for entry?** No

**Fully vaccinated are exempt from:** -

**Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:**

**Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:**

**"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:**

**Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:**

**Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised?** N/A

**Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?**

**"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:**

**Accepted boosters:**

**"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:**

Recovery status is valid from days until after .

**Vaccination certificates accepted:**

**Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:**

**Recent recovery document required:**

**Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:**

**Explanation:**

Travellers are no longer required to show proof of vaccination for entry into the country.

**Sources:**

<http://caab.gov.bd/circul/AT%20Circular%20FSR-01-2023%20may26.pdf>

**Last change to vaccination policy:**

08 March 2022

**Last Update:**

02 November 2023

---

## Other International Travel Restrictions

**Exit Requirements Explanation:**

**Last Update:**



## Domestic Situation

### Areas on Lockdown

**Last Update:**

### Areas under Curfew

**Last Update:**

---

## Domestic Travel

### **Domestic Travel Explanation:**

Domestic flights have resumed, including at Dhaka (DAC/VGHS), Cox's Bazar (CXB/VGCB), Sylhet (ZYL/VGSY), Saidpur (SPD/VGSD), Barisal (BZL/VGBR), Rajshahi (RJH/VGRJ) and Chittagong/Chattogram (CGP/VGEG) airports.

### **Security-related movement restrictions**

Authorities imposed a ban on tourist movement in Bandarban district's Rowangchhari upazila, Chittagong division, due to an ongoing security operation in the area. The movement ban was lifted in Ruma and Thanchi upazilas on 14 July.

**Last Update:** 02 November 2023

---

## Other Domestic Restrictions

**Last Update:**

---

## Resources

**Government COVID Site:** <https://corona.gov.bd/>

**Health Dept COVID Site:** <http://www.mohfw.gov.bd/>

There are no recent incidents

# Local Travel : ● High Risk

---

## Travel Safety

**Air Travel: Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC/VGHS)** is located in **Kurmitola**, about 20km (13 miles) north of **Dhaka**. The airport is the principal point of entry for foreign visitors to Bangladesh and serves as a hub for the national air carrier, Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) - has been judged by the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to be in violation of basic international aviation safety standards. The condition of the runways at **Dhaka Airport** is a source of particular concern, and a number of Biman's domestic and international flights have experienced maintenance problems. In February 2019, an attempted hijacking of a Biman flight took place when a suspect used a fake pistol and a bomb to threaten the passengers and crew; police apprehended the suspect when the aircraft landed at **Chittagong Shah Amanat Airport (CGP/VGEG)**. The incident points towards security lapses and inadequate safety standards at the country's airports.

Airport taxis are available and offer the safest and easiest means of travelling to and from **Dhaka Airport**. Visitors arriving at the airport are recommended to use the pre-paid taxi stand in arrivals to avoid possible overcharging.

**Airspace:** National Carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has resumed direct flights with select destinations including Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Kuwait, Thailand and Saudi Arabia. Flights under an 'air bubble' arrangement also resumed between India and Bangladesh, following a prolonged suspension.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines resumed flights between **Bangladesh's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC/VGHS)** in Dhaka and **China's Kunming Changshui International Airport (KMG/ZPPP)** in Yunnan province and **Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport (CAN/ZGGG)** in Guangdong province from mid-August, after receiving approval from Chinese authorities.

There are no capacity restrictions on carrying passengers for any type of aircraft.

Etihad Airways, which is the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, suspended flights to Hazrat Shahjalal Airport (DAC/VGHS) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 29 October until further notice due to commercial reasons.

**Borders and Entry:** Effective 25 May, travellers from all countries are allowed entry irrespective of their origin, vaccination status or purpose of travel.

Authorities resumed India-Bangladesh international train services between Kolkata and New Jalpaiguri (NJP) in West Bengal state, India, and Dhaka and Khulna in Bangladesh, namely the Kolkata-Dhaka Maitree Express, Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express and NJP-Dhaka Mitali Express.

**Road Travel:** Vehicles drive on the left-hand side of the road. Generally, speed limits are 25-30kph (16-19 mph) in urban areas and 80kph (50 mph) outside urban areas. Roads are poorly maintained. The streets of **Dhaka** are extremely congested, with thousands of bicycle rickshaws competing with taxis, cars, overloaded buses and trucks on limited road space. Streets are poorly lit and motorists frequently drive without headlights or on full beam and at high speed. Drivers overtake other vehicles at inappropriate moments, and head-on collisions are common. The practice of people sitting on the roof of buses and trains, coupled with severe overcrowding inside vehicles, also leads to numerous fatal traffic accidents. Fatal head-on collisions on intercity roads are common. If you are involved in a road accident, it is advised that you leave the area immediately and report to the nearest police station. For minor accidents, the police will usually take the side of the party offering the highest bribe.

A departure tax must be paid prior to leaving Bangladesh and entering India. A change of route permit is needed if you entered Bangladesh via plane and leave through an overland border crossing.

**Rail Travel:** Bangladesh has an extensive but ageing rail network, which is generally slow. Two passenger trains operate between Bangladesh and India; the Maitree Express connects **Dhaka** to the Indian city of Kolkata, while the Bandhan Express connects **Khulna** with Kolkata. However, there have been many fatal derailments and collisions in recent years, making railway travel unsuitable for visitors.

## Public Transport

**Ferries and Boats:** Bangladesh is a riverine country, with a wide network of waterways used for public transportation. Typically ageing, overloaded and top-heavy, ferries are subject to capsizing, with fatal ferry accidents constantly reported during the monsoon season (May to October) or when encountering thunderstorms or wind gusts that arise unpredictably. Therefore, visitors are advised to avoid using ferries or boats for travel.

Piracy occurs occasionally in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. Increased crackdowns

on piracy by the Bangladesh Coast Guard have prevented a number of piracy incidents in the **Chittagong anchorage** and surrounding ports in recent years. Pirate groups, who are involved in criminal activities like robberies, kidnapping and arms smuggling, are still active in parts of the **Sundarbans** and sporadically engage in gunfights with security forces. Note that pirates in the area are known for targeting ships preparing to drop anchor.

**Buses:** Although bus services are extensive, they are prone to overcrowding, lengthy delays and fatal accidents, particularly on poorly-maintained roads. All bus services stop at the **India-Bangladesh border**; a daily executive service links Kolkata, India, with **Dhaka**. However, bus travel, especially on basic state-run and city buses, should be avoided due to high rates of accidents and a high rate of pickpocketing and sexual assaults.

**Rickshaws:** Bicycle rickshaws and auto-rickshaws (also known as baby taxis) are abundant within city limits, with fares negotiated before departing. Bicycle rickshaws are a popular transport option among locals, but do come with risks and travellers are advised not to use these services due to the poor condition of vehicles and the high likelihood of pickpocketing. Baby taxis are used more often in **Dhaka** than regular taxis. They are metered, although drivers rarely turn the meter on; fares should be negotiated beforehand or travellers should ask the driver to turn the meter on.

**Taxis:** Local public taxi services in Bangladesh are often difficult to hail. Air-conditioned yellow taxis and non-air-conditioned black taxis are unreliable due to poor service quality, and the drivers frequently refuse to use fare metres. Several app-based cab services are available in urban areas and are much more reliable and preferred by visitors.

**Vehicle Hire:** Rental cars with drivers are recommended over self-drive, as local drivers have a better knowledge of the road network and road rules. It is best to consult a trusted local guide from a reputable company.

## Recent incidents

22 December 2023 - 23 December 2023

● **Moderate risk: Railway officials suspend specific train services in the country due to insecurity**

Bangladesh Railway officials suspended around six local, commuter and express train services that run at night through remote areas in the country, including those plying the Rajshahi-Parbatipur and the Dhaka-Narayanganj routes, until further notice, due to fears of sabotage amid recent attacks targeting trains. More trains are likely to be suspended in the near-term.

19 December 2023 - 20 December 2023

● **Medium risk: Deadly arson attack targeting passenger train reported in Dhaka**

Local sources reported that at least four people, including a child, were killed after unidentified assailants set fire to three compartments of the Mohanganj Express train near the Tejgaon railway station in Tejgaon, Dhaka, Dhaka district, Dhaka division, during early morning hours local time; the blaze was later brought under control.

18 December 2023 - 19 December 2023

● **Moderate risk: BNP members to launch shutdown strike nationwide on 18 December**

Local sources indicated that members of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) planned to launch a shutdown strike nationwide from 06:00 local time (00:00 GMT) until evening hours local time on 18 December, to demand the resignation of the current government, among other issues.

16 December 2023 - 17 December 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Traffic advisory issued in Dhaka for Victory Day on 16 December - Update

Dhaka Metropolitan Police warned of route diversions and other possible traffic disruptions in and around Dhaka, especially near the National Martyr's Monument, on 16 December, due to events related to Victory Day. Large vehicles such as buses and minibuses are urged to avoid Gabtoli, Amin Bazar Bridge and Savar Raod between 03:30-09:00 local time (21:30-03:00 GMT); vehicles from Aricha towards Dhaka should avoid Amin Bazar.

# Destination Hotspots

---

**Cities, Towns and Villages:** The **Gulshan Circle-2, Banani, Badda** and **G Mohammadpur areas of Dhaka** should be avoided during the night-time, due to reports of muggings and assaults, mostly targeting foreign nationals. Instances of theft and harassment have also been reported at **Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC/VGHS)** and **Sylhet's Osamani International Airport (ZYL/VGSY)** after dark.

# Safety

---

## Emergency Numbers

Medical, Police	<b>999</b>	
Fire	<b>16163</b>	

**Corruption:** Some of the institutional departments are considered to be corrupt. However, a visitor is only likely to come into contact with the police, who may solicit bribes or demand payment for bogus fines. While foreign visitors may experience low-level bribery, residents are more likely to be affected. The police may extort bribes for unfounded arrests, and deaths in police custody are high, particularly in Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) custody. Visitors to police stations should be accompanied to mitigate the risk of officials abusing power.

There is a high chance that businesses may face bribery in Bangladesh, as corruption is endemic in public life. While the issue has been at the forefront of national political discussion, there has been a lack of will on all sides to effectively address the problem, undermining governance and civil institutions, as well as hindering development. Graft charges filed against former public officials hint at positive changes.

**Drugs and Alcohol:** Since Bangladesh is a Muslim country, the sale and consumption of alcohol are very limited. A passport holder from a non-Muslim country is allowed to bring alcohol into the country for personal consumption. Some designated international hotels in **Dhaka** also sell alcohol to international clientele, as do expatriate members' clubs. Home-brewed alcohol should be avoided at all costs due to health risks.

Penalties for the traffic or possession of drugs are notoriously severe. Some offences are punishable by the death penalty or life imprisonment.

**Food and Drink:** There is no effective system of health inspection of restaurants. Travellers are advised to avoid roadside cafes.

It is recommended that travellers only drink bottled water, which is available throughout the country. Be sure to ask for a sealed bottle. While travelling, buy your water from large supermarkets or pharmacies.

**Import and Export:** Customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export of items such as currency, household appliances, alcohol, cigarettes and weapons.

**Photography:** Photographs of military installations should not be taken. If caught, you will likely have your camera equipment confiscated and may be detained for questioning.

**Security Services:** The Bangladesh Police, including the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), are responsible for internal law and order. The RAB, formed from members of the police, army and the paramilitary force the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), formerly known as the Bangladesh Rifles, was created to counter a rising crime rate and has become widely feared. Although more disciplined and better equipped and trained than the regular police, the 12,500-strong RAB has a reputation for brutality.

The majority of local police tend to lack basic resources and funding. Police stations are left understaffed and without the necessary technology and office resources to fully investigate major crimes. However, police are generally responsive when aiding foreign nationals who fall victim to a crime. A specialised unit known as 'Tourism Police' are operational across several districts in the country. Tourists may also be assisted regarding various facilities through an app called 'Hello Tourist'.

The lower ranks of Bangladesh security services, the local constabulary, lack effective training and equipment. Accounting for the vast majority of security personnel, they are stretched thin by high levels of criminality and are poorly paid. They are widely perceived as corrupt and subject to political interference. The police are active across the country; however, a higher concentration is seen in urban centres, mainly **Dhaka**.

Low levels of pay and training within the police force contribute to a culture of corruption, impunity and abuse of power. Police are reported to use excessive force against protestors and force victims to retract statements in cases of enforced disappearances. Prison conditions are dire and torture of prisoners has been reported. There have been complaints that police do not respond effectively to domestic abuse or to acid attacks, the victims of which are mostly young women, often attacked by spurned young men. These attitudes towards violence against women mean that police stations are unlikely to be adequately equipped to deal with complaints of sexual assault or rape.

# Culture

---

**Religious Sensitivities:** Bangladesh is a majority Sunni Muslim country and travellers are encouraged to dress and behave modestly, especially in public places. Avoid public displays of affection. Travellers should respect local customs and sensitivities at all times, especially close to religious centres. Avoid eating and drinking in public during Ramadan.

# Specific Traveller Advice

---

## Female Travellers

**Local Customs and Laws:** There are some local customs and laws that a female traveller should take into consideration in Bangladesh. Refrain from wearing clothing that could be considered too tight or revealing, especially in conservative areas, near historic monuments, beaches and mosques, as this is socially unacceptable in a Muslim-major society. Wearing a traditional headscarf (hijab) to fully cover your hair is mandatory when visiting mosques. Travel with a local guide if visiting a mosque, as many mosques do not allow lone young female visitors; it is easier to negotiate the terms of entrance with a local guide. Outside city centres, it is not culturally acceptable for women to smoke, drink or hold hands with men in public. In many rural areas, female travellers will not be allowed to dine with men. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussion as women suspected of flouting customs are often assaulted by locals.

**Safety:** There are many safety concerns\*\* \*\*that a female traveller should take into consideration in Bangladesh. Sexual assaults, harassment and violent crimes targeting women are rampant in major cities like **Dhaka, Khulna** and **Rajshahi**. Foreign female travellers may receive unwanted attention from local men, ranging from open displays of catcalling, whistling, stalking and staring to physical groping. It is best to ignore these advances and walk away.

Avoid all forms of public transport, as sexual assaults are common onboard buses and trains. Use only official and registered taxis or reputed radio cabs. Avoid sitting in the front seat of the taxi and always take the seat behind the driver, as there have been some reports of sexual advances by cab drivers. Avoid hailing taxis off the street. Opt for private, non-shared taxis; ensure the taxi is empty in the back before getting into the vehicle. Consider having a hotel shuttle or registered corporate chauffeur meet you at the airport upon arrival, particularly if arriving after dark. Do not walk alone at night, especially in deserted areas, beaches or villages where assault rates are high. Sexual assaults of female travellers are also periodically reported at remote hotels and guest houses. When possible, stay only in lodgings that have 24-hour on-site security and ensure that they are not situated in an isolated location. If available, opt for a room on a women-only floor. Do not disclose if travelling alone or if a male companion is not your spouse, as there are instances of unmarried couples being assaulted at

less-reputable lodgings by conservative locals. Often, reports of sexual crimes are not efficiently investigated by police, especially if security personnel or government officials are instigators of these crimes; police usually blame the victims for dressing or acting inappropriately. Female travellers should exercise caution when reporting crimes to local police/authorities/security services. Consider consulting your home consulate/embassy for legal advice, and ensure you receive a copy of the police report.

**Health and Wellness:** Women have access to some specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in Bangladesh, particularly in urban areas of **Dhaka, Khulna, Sylhet** and **Rajshahi**. Abortion can only be legally performed at a hospital if it is done to save a woman's life. There are a few Menstrual Regulation clinics, especially in **Dhaka**, which accept to terminate pregnancies of up to 10 weeks, using an alternate non-surgical procedure. Rape kits are available at reputed hospitals. Female-specific OTC drugs, prescription and emergency oral contraceptives, and feminine hygiene products are not available outside major cities like **Dhaka** and **Khulna**. Consult a health professional prior to travel, especially if pregnant or planning to become pregnant, due to sporadic outbreaks of Zika in the territory. Consider bringing an adequate supply of female-specific OTC drugs, feminine hygiene products and oral contraceptive pills, which may not be available locally.

### **LGBT+**

Homosexuality is illegal in Bangladesh and is a criminal and punishable offence. Persons found guilty may be sentenced to life in prison. There are no legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country, while transgender community members are legally recognised. Same-sex marriage is illegal. LGBT+ activities and persons are not socially accepted. LGBT+ individuals are also often discriminated against and targeted in deadly attacks by Islamist extremists across the country, including major cities like **Dhaka, Khulna, Sylhet** and **Rajshahi**. LGBT+ travellers are advised to keep their sexual orientation and gender identities private. Refrain from engaging in any conversations about sexuality or LGBT+ issues. Avoid all public displays of affection, including hand-holding. Book separate hotel rooms. Transgender travellers are advised to have a passport and identification changed to reflect their new gender before travelling.

### **Technology & Communication Risk**

Travellers are likely to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in Bangladesh

Internet access and social media have some restrictions. Some internet and social

media contents that are deemed to be against Islam cannot be accessed freely; any associated social media posting can be unlawful and users are subject to arrest and jail sentences due to the country's strict blasphemy laws. In addition, the government has temporarily blocked Facebook and other social media platforms on several occasions, for purposes of maintaining security during incidents of political unrest or militant attacks, for example. There are some concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device searches and inspections at the border are unlikely. There are some restrictions in relation to bringing or operating sensitive equipment, which may include photo cameras, satellite phones, drones, and other GPS systems, in the country. In particular, the possession and usage of satellite phones are prohibited in Bangladesh and individuals caught risk arrest and possible prison time. State or criminal penetration of private data is likely. Authorities implement some state surveillance of ICT networks in the country.

Travellers should ensure that their ICT usage is compliant with local laws and regulations during their stay in the country. Travellers should expect possible restrictions in accessing specific internet websites/platforms and/or digital services. Posting specific content online may also be regulated. Travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure. Travellers should be prepared for possible device searches at the border and should ensure that their ICT devices are compliant with local laws and regulations prior to their arrival into the country. Those seeking to bring satellite phones into the country must request permission from the Bangladesh Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC), which may grant approval under specific circumstances related to national security, dignitary protection, humanitarian assistance or disaster recovery. Travellers should be aware that the country enforces a limited degree of surveillance of telephone and electronic communications, and travellers should remember that communication may be monitored. Online activities may be monitored. Cybercriminal groups may be present in the country. Exercise discretion in deciding to bring sensitive data into the country.

# Legal notice

---

Any use of this document and its content is subject to the following terms and conditions, which you accept by using the document from Riskline. If you do not accept these terms and conditions, you are not allowed to use the document.

All written and graphic content belong to Riskline. Such content is provided by Riskline to customers, employees, and the general public for lawful purposes only. The document is subject to change at any time at the discretion of Riskline and without prior written notice. You may not modify the document or any Riskline printed matter or images in any way.

No warranty. All information is provided by Riskline on an 'as is' basis only, and does not constitute a warranty of any kind, neither express nor implied. Riskline provides no representations and warranties, express or implied, including the implied warranties of suitability for a particular purpose, merchantability, and no infringement.

Limitation of liability. In no event will Riskline be liable to any party for any direct, indirect, special or other consequential damages for any use of this Document, or on any other hyper linked website, including, without limitation, any lost profits, business interruption, loss of programs or other data on your information handling system or otherwise, even if we are expressly advised of the possibility of such damages.

© Riskline 2023