

Notes for short-term visitors to Bangladesh

Updated 2 April 2009



Welcome to Bangladesh. We hope the information that we have provided here will be useful.

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1. Introduction

Bangladesh became one of the last large nation states in 1971 when it seceded from Pakistan. Prior to the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Bangladesh was a part of India which was ruled the British and Mughal Empires. Since independence, the government has experienced periods of democratic and military rule.

History

After the military crackdown by the Pakistan army began on the night of March 25, 1971 **Bangabandhu** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested and the political leaders dispersed, mostly fleeing to neighbouring India where they organized a provisional government afterwards. On March 26, 1971 the independence of the country was declared. After nine months the war of independence ended. On December 16, 1971 the country gained its independence. [Wikipedia]

Geography

Bangladesh covers an area of 57,295 sq miles (147,570 sq. km) - approximately the size of England and Wales combined, but with a population of 150 million people, it is the most densely populated country in the world. Formerly, East Pakistan it became Bangladesh in 1971. It is bordered by India in the north, north-east and west, and Myanmar in the South East and by the Bay of Bengal in the South. The climate is sub-tropical

Main Seasons

Winter - November to February	Maximum	:	29 degrees C
	Minimum	:	11 degrees C
Summer - March to June	Maximum	:	34 degrees C
	Minimum	:	21 degrees C
Monsoon-July to October (Average rainfall 1194 mm to 3454 mm.)	Maximum	:	35 degrees C
	Minimum	:	30 degrees C

Except during winter, temperatures are high throughout the year. The hottest months are May to July. Relative humidity from 80-90 % also makes these the most uncomfortable months. Some slight relief from the heat is provided by the monsoon rains from June to August. Winter is the most pleasant season and is dry, sunny and comfortably warm. March sees a change, often sudden, with a marked rise in both temperature and humidity.

Main Cities

There are 6 cities in Bangladesh. These are Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal. Dhaka is the capital city, Chittagong is the main seaport.

GDP per capita is US\$ 554. The population growth rate remains at about 2.2% per year. 80% of the population lives in rural areas. Agriculture accounts for 35% of GDP and 65% of employment. The population of Dhaka is estimated at 12 million. [Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics]

The official language is Bangla, sometimes called Bengali. English is widely understood and spoken in Dhaka and big towns.

The literacy rate is 48.7 per cent among children, aged 7, and 65 per cent among the 15 and above age groups. [Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics]

What to wear

Lightweight cottons and linens are suitable throughout the year. Warmer clothes are needed in the evenings during the cool season. Umbrellas are necessary during the monsoon season.

For women, dresses, skirts and loose trousers are the most advisable for business and official socialising. In Muslim countries, exposure of the legs, particularly above the knee, is frowned upon. Very short skirts are not appropriate, shoulders should be covered and low necklines avoided. All national colleagues wear Shalwar Kameez (dress length tops with trousers) and many expatriate women feel more comfortable in the same, particularly when travelling outside of Dhaka/Chittagong. In the expatriate clubs less conservative clothes are acceptable.

For men, shirts and ties are normal business wear. Jackets are only required for very formal meetings (e.g. with high ranking officials such as Ministers). Shorts should be reserved for the expatriate clubs.

Religion

Islam, the state religion, is the faith of 88 percent of the population, Hindus make up most of the remainder, and the country has small communities of Buddhists, Christians, and animists.

Among certain obligations for Muslims are to pray five times a day – at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspapers each day. Friday is the Muslim holiday so many men will go for prayer in the afternoon.

During the holy month of Ramadan all Muslims must fast from dawn to dusk and are only permitted to work six hours per day. Fasting includes no eating, drinking, cigarette smoking, or gum chewing. Expatriates are not required to fast; however, they must not eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum in public. Each evening at sunset, families and friends gather together to celebrate the breaking of the fast (Iftar). The festivities often continue well into the night. In general, things happen more slowly during Ramadan. Many businesses operate on a reduced schedule. Shops may be opened and closed at unusual times. Many cafes and restaurants are closed during the day, only to re-open in evenings; you'll generally need to get to the post office to send your letters before noon.

Etiquette & Customs**Meeting Etiquette**

- Bangladeshis take their time during greetings to converse about their families, friends and other general topics
- Handshakes are the customary greeting among individuals of the same sex
- In any greeting between men and women, the woman must extend her hand first. If she does not, a man should simply bow his head in acknowledgment

- At parties or other social gatherings your hosts will introduce you, usually starting with the women and then moving on to the men in rough approximation of age order, oldest to youngest
- Greet and say good-bye to each person individually

Gift Giving Etiquette

- If you are invited to a Bangladeshi's home bring sweets, nuts, fruit or flowers to the hostess
- Do not bring alcohol unless you know that your host drinks

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a Bangladeshi home:

- Dress well. Dressing well demonstrates respect towards your hosts
- Check to see if your spouse is included in the invitation

Places of Worship

Mosques:

Dhaka has several hundred mosques. Prominent are Baitull Mukarram-National Mosque, the seven Domed Mosque (17th century), Star Mosque (18th century), Chawkbazar Mosque and Huseni Dalan Mosque.

Temple:

Dhakeshwari National Temple. The name "Dhakeshwari" means "Goddess of Dhaka". The temple is located southwest of the Salimullah Hall of Dhaka University.

The Ramna Kali Mandir is on outskirts of the Ramna Park (now renamed as Suhrawardy Udyan).

Churches:

Anglican Communion - (aka: The Church of Bangladesh)

Assemblies of God

Baptist Fellowship

Catholic

Church of Christ - 48 Dilu Road, Dhaka - Tel. 880-2-935 1445

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Foursquare

Nazarene

Presbyterian Fellowship in Bangladesh

Salvation Army - GPO Box 985, Dhaka (2) 988 2836

Seventh Day Adventist

United Churches

Currency

Notes are in denominations of Taka 1000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1.

Coins are in denominations of paisa Tk 1 coin, Tk 2 coin, Tk 5 coin, 50 paisa and 25 paisa

The current exchange rate is approximately Taka 97.70 = £1

Standard Time

GMT + 6 hours

Working Hours

British Council office hours are

Saturday to Thursday - 9.00 am to 4.00 pm [Office hours are shorter during Ramadan] (Ramzan)

Government office hours are:

Sunday to Thursday - 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Early closing during Ramadan (Ramzan)

Banking hours:

Sunday to Thursday - 9.00 am to 3.00 pm

Standard Chartered Bank has ATMs in Dhaka, Chittagong, Bogra, Sylhet, Narayangani and Khulna. HSBC have ATMs in Dhaka and Chittagong. Both accept UK cashpoint and VISA cards. Travellers' cheques can be cashed at banks. Western Union has offices in Dhaka where money can be sent from the UK.

There is no requirement for visitors to carry identification, except when visiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts. We advise all British visitors to register with the British High Commission in Dhaka.

Postal Services

International and external postal services are sporadic in reliability. Bulky and unusual items are sometimes held up by the Post Office, ordinary airmail letters are having been known to take weeks. British Council can advise on options for both sending and receiving mail.

Telephones

The telephone system is reliable locally but international connections can cause problems. Street corner and telephone booths are not available but there are private communication outlets available around the city from where local, ISD, mobile phone calls and fax can be made by payment. Cell phone networks are generally reliable and local SIM cards are available at £1-5. International roaming works well and has roaming connection services like : Airtel, BPL, HUTCH, NTNN and others.

Electricity

220v (AC) / 50Hz 2 pin plugs

Please note that the British Council (offices and houses), and Hotel Sheraton are provided with standard 3 pin 13 AMP sockets as used in the UK. Delicate electronic or electrical equipment should be linked to a voltage stabilizer. Adaptors are readily available.

2. Arrival & Departure**Visas**

All visitors need a valid visa obtained from the Bangladesh High Commission in London or elsewhere before departure. Bangladesh Missions are available in 56 countries around the world. If the traveller is a national of a country where there is no Bangladesh Mission, they can have a landing permit or a single entry visa on arrival at the airport on payment of a visa fee of £40 in sterling or dollars. The validity of such a visa is from one week to 12 weeks maximum and is not extendable. If you are obtaining your visa from Bangladesh Embassy in UK, for single –entry for maximum 3 months £40, Double –entry for maximum 6 months £52, Multiple–entry for 6 months £75, Multiple –entry for 1 year £104

For British passport holders visiting Bangladesh, if they are coming from a country where there is no Bangladeshi Mission, then the visitor must obtain their visa from the UK, or from a nearby country which houses a Bangladeshi Mission. **British visitors cannot obtain visas on arrival.** You will be sent on the next flight out! If you are planning on passing through Bangladesh again you need to have a multiple entry visa.

For Example: If a British passport holder from Malawi wants to come to Bangladesh, then as there is no Bangladeshi Mission in Malawi, then that British passport holder must obtain his/her visa from UK or a nearby country.

Since 15 April 2002, foreign nationals working in Bangladesh have been required to obtain an Income Tax Clearance Certificate or an Income Tax Exemption Certificate prior to each departure from Bangladesh. Full details of the requirements and those exempted can be obtained from the Bangladesh Board of Revenue website: <http://www.nbr-bd.org>

The airport at Dhaka is much improved and work is still being done to improve it. When you arrive, you will have to spend a long time at immigration - leaving the plane quickly will help here, though. You must fill in an immigration form [now usually distributed before landing, with a customs declaration form], before showing your passport. When you have collected your luggage, you need to come right out of the airport to meet your contact, as visitors aren't allowed inside the airport building.

We advise against all but essential travel to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (this does not include Chittagong City) because of the risk of being caught up in clashes between rival tribal groups, settlers and the military.

You should be aware of the threat from terrorism in Bangladesh. Attacks using explosive devices continue to take place in locations throughout the country, including in Dhaka and the Sylhet region, with increasing frequency. Some of these attacks appear to have been indiscriminate and have been carried out in public places, in particular markets, cinemas and shrines and at cultural events and political gatherings. Local journalists and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have also been targeted. There is a risk that you might get caught up in such attacks.

You should be aware that if you or your parents are of Bangladeshi origin you may be considered by the Bangladesh Government to be a Bangladeshi citizen, even if you have never held a Bangladeshi passport. In such cases this may limit the assistance the British Government can offer you.

You should avoid demonstrations and large gatherings including "hartals" (political strikes). There is a danger of street crime, including armed robbery.

We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Terrorism

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Please visit the Foreign and Commonwealth website for more travel advice shortly before travelling www.fco.gov.uk/travel

Customs

A tourist may import limited quantities of alcohol, tobacco and small presents, camera, Laptop, PCs without tax. Some of the taxable items are Television, Music centre, Air Conditioner, Oven. A visitor may bring up to \$5000 of foreign exchange in the form of traveller's cheques or foreign currency.

Health

Health facilities in Bangladesh are relatively basic for critical problems, and all visitors are required to take out medical insurance to cover their period of travel and stay. The insurance must include cover for emergency medical evacuation to a nearby country [normally Bangkok or Singapore]. Under some programme the cost of this insurance may be reimbursed by the Council, against receipt.

Visitors are advised to drink only water that has been boiled and filtered, mineral water or bottled drinks and beware of ice in establishments where it may not have been boiled before making, and raw vegetable/salads which may not have been disinfected. Tummy upsets can be a nuisance and you should travel with medicaments as advised by your GP. Drinking plenty of liquids and oral re-hydration is strongly advised if you have an upset stomach, to avoid dehydration. Or-saline or other ORT is readily available in local pharmacies.

If you take regular medication, you should bring supplies with you. Most drugs and medicines are however available in Bangladesh either over the counter or through the British Clinic in an emergency (medicines from the Clinic are expensive as they are imported).

Immunisations:

You are advised to take malaria prophylaxis if travelling outside the major cities, and repellent sprays/creams are not easy to obtain here. Bring one with you. TB is rising. All normal vaccinations are advised. You should consult your nearest travel clinic or GP well in advance of your departure, to allow time for these to be done.

British High Commission and British Council staff uses the British High Commission Clinic at:

Elizabeth House British High Commission, Baridhara
Tel: 8822705-9 ext 2409,
Sunday – Thursday 08:30-15:30
Mobile 011812398 (after office hour)

Or a Doctor on the British High Commission Medical Panel:

Dr. M A Wahab House # 3, Road #12, Baridhara
General Practitioner Tel: 8821454, 8855953, 8827553
Saturday to Thursday 8.00 AM - 12.00 PM
4.00 PM - 8.00 PM
Fridays Closed

Dr David Johnson House # 52, Road # 11, Banani
Dentist Tel: 8822849, 8826789, 9894361, 0172 498 6844, 01911 264 644

Seventh Day Adventist Dental Clinic

Road # 94, House # 3/A Gulshan -2
Tel: 9894948 / 8822529

Travelling around**By Air:**

Bangladesh can be reached by air from any part of the world. Biman, British Airways, Thai Air, UAE, Kuwait Air, Qatar Air, Indian Airlines all operate flights, as do Singapore Airlines.

Besides Biman, there is a reliable private airline – GMG - operating nationally and to Kolkata, and soon to Colombo and Mumbai. Biman flies from Dhaka to Chittagong, Jessore, Cox's Bazar,

Rajshahi, Saidpur and Sylhet on its 7 domestic routes. Flights are often delayed or cancelled however.

Rail:

Bangladesh Railway provides a service (although not always a timely one) to places of interest such as Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Mymensingh, Bogra, Rajshahi, and Dinajpur starting from Dhaka. The inter-city Express Service is available to and from important cities at cheap fares.

Waterways

Country-made boats are the most widely used carrier one can see on the river and rivulets. These carry passengers and merchandise on a large scale. The landscape of Bangladesh is dominated by about 250 rivers, which flow essentially north south. The alluvial flood plain formed by these rivers covers most of the country. Wherever there is a river and a village, a launch or steamer will ply for trade. A journey by Rocket Steamer service from Dhaka (Sadarghat) to Khulna, the gateway to Sundarbans is a rewarding experience.

Bus/Coach Services

Road transport in Bangladesh is a private sector affair operating predominantly in domestic routes. Rates are among the cheapest in the world. Express and non stop services are available to principal towns from Gabtoli, Saidabad and Mohakhai bus terminals in Dhaka. The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) also maintains a countrywide network of bus services. Recently they have introduced Dhaka - Calcutta - Dhaka direct daily bus services via Benapole, Jessore. However road accidents are very frequent and travelling at night is not advised.

Taxis:

Conventional taxis are available at the main hotels and the airport but are expensive. Recently a large number of metered taxis (both with and without A/C) have been introduced in Dhaka. Yellow taxis have air-conditioning while black ones do not.

The main hotels run an airport to city bus service. Rental cars are also available in the city and outside Dhaka. Details as follows:

Cab-1	0189230173
Navana	9558065, 9352847-9
Capital	9352847-9
Anudip	8125285, 8127611
Cab Salida	9344477, 01710620888

	Yellow cab	Black cab
First 2 KM	@TK=40/-	@TK=30/-
Thereafter per kilometer	@TK=10/-	@TK=7.5/-
One minute wait	@TK=1.25/-	@TK=1/-

Visitors intending to drive should hold an international driving licence.

Rickshaw:

Rickshaws are good for short distances (10-15 mins) and are very cheap. They are not suitable for long distances and not everyone feels comfortable riding in rickshaws, particularly in heavily congested areas they are no longer allowed to travel on the main roads before 9pm and therefore may of limited use as a means of transport for business purposes. The alternative is the baby CNG taxi (motorised three wheeler) which can be used to get around during the day.

It is important to remember that law and order on the streets of Dhaka can be as erratic as in many other cities and that travelling at night by rickshaw/Baby Taxi leaves one open to mugging. If you are travelling at night, try to get a lift or travel by rickshaw or baby taxi in groups. It would be unlikely that a *rickshA wAla* will speak English, so you will have to be prepared for some interesting bargaining.

Traditions and Customs

In Bangladesh, people are renowned for their friendliness and hospitality, and much business socialising is centered around meal times. Certain ways of doing things, however, can take visitors by surprise. It is not uncommon, for example, for foreigners to be stared at openly in the streets, and be approached by inquisitive bystanders. This is usually non-threatening, but may frequently be related to requests for money. There are no hard and fast rules about giving money, but avoid taking out large amounts of it in public by keeping small denomination notes in separate pockets.

Alcohol is not readily available in Bangladesh, although most restaurants and hotels are happy for you to bring your own bottles. There is a duty free shop, where you can buy alcohol on arrival in Dhaka, but visitors generally bring their favorite tipple with them. Mixers and cold drinks are readily available.

As in many other countries, religious norms in Bangladesh vary greatly from one person to another, so there are no hard and fast rules in a business context. Many women prefer not to shake hands with men, and similarly, it is not considered disrespectful if a Bangladeshi man does not shake hands with a woman. During Ramadan, non-Muslim visitors should be particularly sensitive to the fact that many people will be fasting (refraining from eating, drinking and smoking) during daylight, which affects hours available for business.

Political demonstrations, known as "hartals", occur in Bangladesh with varying degrees of frequency, depending on the current political climate. During peak hartal, as many as 2-3 can occur in a week, although more usually it averages around one or two per month. Hartals can last between a half and a full day and foreigners are strongly advised not to travel in certain areas of the city where demonstrations could become aggressive. Providing you follow advice, hartals are not threatening, but can cause considerable disruption to business meetings and plans.

Dhaka

The capital city of Bangladesh is Dhaka. The offices of the Central Government and the Diplomatic Missions are based here. Dhaka is a sprawling city with few landmarks and newcomers usually take some time to find their sense of direction.

The principal areas are:

- **The old town** crowded along the River Buriganga and the site of most of the tourist attractions, the Lalbagh Fort, the Star Mosque, Nawab Ahsan Manzil and the Armenian Church.
- The spacious parkland suburb of **Ramna**. Most of the Government offices, two universities and the British Council are located in this area. The Secretariat Building, which houses most Government Ministries, is in Abdul Ghani Road. In colonial times Ramna was the administrative headquarters for East Bengal and several splendid buildings, principally Curzon Hall and the Supreme Court, survive from this period.

- East of Ramna and beyond the National Stadium lies the commercial area of **Motijheel**. Most of the large business houses and international firms and banks (Standard Chartered and Grindlays) are found in these areas.
- West of Ramna and the Mirpur Road are the residential areas of **Dhanmondi, Lalmatia and Mohammadpur**. The residential character of Dhanmondi is changing as more houses are converted into offices. The offices of most of the United Nations agencies are located in Dhanmondi, as are those of many international voluntary organisations. The British Council's Teaching Centre is located in Dhanmondi.
- **The massive National Assembly dominates Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, the site of the intended second capital in Pakistan days.** The neighbouring red brick buildings are the houses of senior Government officials. The whole complex is the work of the American architect Louis Khan. The Planning Commission, the Agriculture Complex (Farmgate) and the Jute Research Institute are all in this area.
- **Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara** on the north side of the town in the direction of the Zia International Airport, are the new residential areas. The majority of the expatriate community lives in these areas. The British High Commission and most diplomatic missions are in Gulshan or Baridhara. A new British High Commission building was completed in Baridhara in 1992. The DFID office has moved from the High Commission to Gulshan Avenue.



Restaurants and Clubs

There is a wide range of restaurants and expatriate clubs in the Gulshan area. Nearly all restaurants in these areas accept Visa and Access cards. Restaurants are usually Chinese, Indian or Thai, although there are also Indonesian, Korean and Italian ones. Although most restaurants do not serve alcohol, you can take your own booze along. Dhanmondi is the liveliest area for a wide range of eateries.

Cultural Events

British Council: 5 Fuller Road, Dhaka, inside Dhaka University Campus
 Tel : 8618905
 Hours : Sunday to Thursday 09:00 am to 4:00 pm (Office hours)
 Library – Saturday to Thursday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm
 Friday 3.00pm to 7.00pm

For details of our events please contact the office or request a copy of our quarterly newsmagazine "**Bangladesh Quarterly**".

Alliance Francaise: 26 Mirpur Road (corner of Rd 3) Dhanmondi, Dhaka
 Tel : 9675249
 Hours : Sunday to Friday 9.00 am to 12.00 pm
 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm

Closed on Saturdays

Books, videos, film shows, exhibitions, lectures etc are available. A monthly newsletter is published (copy in the CLO office). A variety of French language classes are also available.

Goethe Institute: House #10, Road # 9(new), Dhanmondi, Dhaka
 Tel : 9126526
 Hours : Sunday to Thursday 11.00 am to 2.00 pm
 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm

Closed on Fridays

American Library: House # 110, Road # 27, Banani, Tel: 8813440 - 4
 Hours : Sunday to Thursday 10.00 am to 5.00 pm
 Closed Fridays and Saturdays

The Russian Cultural Centre: House # 510, Road # 7, Dhanmondi, Dhaka. Tel: 9118531
 Hours : Sunday to Thursday 10.00 am to 5.00 pm
 Closed Fridays and Saturdays

Annex 1

Emergency Numbers

Individual visit programme provide details of your programme and the contacts details of the driver and programme officers, plus emergency British Council staff contact & British High Commission numbers.

In the event of losing your programme unavailability of alternative Emergency numbers, please contact:

Ahsanul Azad – Executive Officer British Council	mobile: 01730320289
S M Reza – Administration Officer- British Council	mobile: 01711543408
Peter Paul D’Costa - Administration Officer- British Council	mobile: 01714046323

Useful Addresses

- l) **British Council**
 5 Fuller Road
 Dhaka - 1000
 Tel: 0088 (2)8618905 Fax: 0088 (2)-8613375
 E-mail: dhaka.enquiries@bd.britishcouncil.org
Office hours: Sunday to Thursday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm
Library hours: Saturday to Thursday 10.00 am to 6.00 pm, Friday 3.00pm to 7.00pm

British Council, Chittagong
 77/A East Nasirabad (behind Chittagong Shopping Complex)
 Chittagong
 Tel: 00 88 (0)31657884-6 Fax: 00 88 (0) 31657881

E-mail: chittagong.enquiries@bd.britishcouncil.org

British Council Teaching Centre

754b Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1205
Tel: 0088 (2) 9116545/9116171 Fax: 0088 (2) 8116554
E-mail: learnenglish@bd.britishcouncil.org

British Council Project Office

English Language and School Support
Al-Hamra Shopping City (6th Floor)
Zinda Bazar, Sylhet,
Tel: 00 880 812 814925 Fax: 00 880 821 814924
E-mail: sylhet.enquiries@bcsylhet.org

- ii) **British High Commission**
United Nations Road
Baridhara, Dhaka
Tel: 00880 2 8822705-9 011858102 (Duty Officer)
Kevin Aspery 01199 809214 (in emergency)
Office hours: Sunday to Thursday 7.30 am to 2.30 pm

- iii) **British Airways**
Uday Tower (8th Floor), Plot 57, Gulshan Avenue (South)
Gulshan 1 Dhaka 1212
Tel : 8815111/8815120/8815117
Office hours: Sunday - Thursday: 9.00 am to 5.30 pm, Friday: 9:00 am to 2:00pm

Annex 2

Shopping in Dhaka

Bangladesh is a country with a rich tradition in handicrafts at throwaway prices. While the muslin of ancient Dhaka has faded into history, other products such as contemporary paintings, wood work, shital pati, bamboo decoration pieces, cane and conch shell products, gold and silver ornaments, cotton, silk, jute, reed, brassware, traditional dolls and leather goods also receive deep appreciation of the lovers of arts and crafts now and over the past centuries. In addition, Bangladesh is famous for freshwater and multicolored pearls.

Gold & Silver: A wide range of gold and silver ornaments, silver filigree work etc. is considered by many travellers to be unparalleled.

Brass & Copperware: Among the best buys here are brass and copperware trays, wall decorations; vases etc. all are hand made with fine engravings and filigree work. Products made from the hides and skins of animals and reptiles, intricate wood carvings, cane and bamboo products, conch shell, bangles, embroidered quilts, jamdani and silk fabrics can also be bought. These are available in DIT market and a number of exclusive shops in New Elephant Road, Dhaka.

Shopping Centres: Most hotels have their own shopping arcades and there are many handicraft shops in Dhaka and other towns. There are several supermarkets: Agora Gulshan Avenue, Nandan at Kamal Ataturk, which sell fresh fruits & vegetables etc. if you don't want the hassle of the local covered markets. Bargaining is part of shopping in Bangladesh. Few places have "fixed prices" so bargaining is expected.

Where to shop

DIT 1 (Dhaka Improvement Trust): Furniture, second hand furniture groceries, household appliances, stationery, clothes and tailors, fruit and vegetables. Open 9.00 am to 8.00 pm. Some shops may close at 3.00 PM for a few hours.

DIT 2: Fresh produce, shops and restaurants. Brass shops and art galleries that also do picture framing. Sports equipment, electrical goods etc.

Agora: 80, Rifles Square, Road 2, Dhanmondi Dhaka & in Gulshan 1 (Supermarket)

Bashundara shopping complex, Pantha Path, has a cinema complex and a wide range of shops in this the largest shopping mall of Dhaka.

Nandan Mega Shop: NWJ (4) Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Gulshan Dhaka (Supermarket),

Aarong: This shop is modern, spacious and offers plenty of products. These range from furniture to clothes. The main attractions are textiles, lamps, bedcovers, clothes, cushions, brass and clay ornaments, pictures, books, fabric, candled and a café where excellent milkshakes are to be found.

1/1, Block A, Lalmatia, Mirpur Road, Dhaka

Tel: 8111607, 8111791

Gulshan- Tejgaon Link Road

Tel: 8821052, 8825986, Fax: 8828576 e- mail: aarongzx@bdmail.net

Banga Bazar: Crowded but a good place to scour cheap, clothing from Garment factories.

Navana Shopping Centre:

Gulshan-1, Dhaka, and Closed on Mondays

Rifles Square

BDR Gate, Zingatola, Dhaka, Closed on Sunday

Rapa Plaza

Mirpur Road, Dhaka. Closed on Mondays

Probartana

Mirpur Road/ Pink City in Gulshan 1

Scarves silk/cotton great colours & good value

Silk Dynasty

Gulshan Avenue: great for real heavy duty and fine silks in a wide range of colours.

Rajshahi Silk

Traditional Silk sarees

Mirpur Road and many centres in Gulshan Avenue, Dhanmondi

Aranya

Indigo and other natural dyes block print Kameez,

Upstairs ' Journey into craft, households / clothes

Kamal Attaturk Avenue

Kumudini

Like Aarong, gifts, clothes and traditional crafts

Gulshan Avenue

Karika and other craft shops

Shopping centre opposite Dhaka Sheraton hotel

Essentials

Designer Bibi Russell – Khadi type cloth and small household items

Gulshan Market: This covers a large area along Bangabandhu Avenue, and is good for clothes from the export sector. Open 10.00 am to 8.00 pm.

The British Council:

- The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.
- We operate in 233 towns and cities in 109 countries and territories worldwide.
- We build relationships and understanding between people in the UK and other countries and increase appreciation of the UK's ideas and achievements overseas.
- The areas we focus on are creativity, education and civil society.
- We are a non-political organisation which operates at arm's length from government.

Our purpose is to build mutually beneficial relationships between people in the UK and other countries and to increase appreciation of the UK's creative ideas and achievements.

This work is driven by our strong belief in internationalism, a commitment to professionalism and an enthusiasm for creativity. These qualities, coupled with our integrity and our conviction that cultural relations can help individuals and the world community to thrive, make the British Council a good partner and a special place to work.

Equal opportunity and diversity

As the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations we develop relationships with people from a wide range of backgrounds. We are committed to equality of opportunity and inclusion, and to positive action to promote this.

Equality of opportunity is about treating people fairly and without bias and about creating conditions in the workplace and wider society that encourage and value diversity and promote dignity. It is also about trying to redress past imbalances and ensuring that dealings with clients, customers and suppliers are conducted in a constructive way which does not give rise to discrimination and supports appropriate inclusion.

Useful Web Addresses

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/bangladesh>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

<http://www.bicn.com>

<http://www.virtualbangladesh.com>

Further Reading

Lonely Planet Bangladesh (Bangladesh, 4th Ed)
by Richard Plunkett, Alex Newton, Betsy Wagenhauser, Jon Murray

The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank
by David Bornstein