



## **Bangladesh**

### **Media and Telecoms Landscape Guide**

**May 2012**

## **Introduction**

Bangladesh is a flat and low-lying country that occasionally suffers from devastating tidal surges and floods.

It is also one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

The scale of human suffering caused by a combination of high winds, tidal surges and heavy rainstorms is sometimes immense.

In 2009, Cyclone Ailia caused a tidal surge that flooded low-lying coastal areas and left about 500,000 homeless.

80% of Bangladesh consists of flood plain.

75% of the country's land area is less than 10 metres above sea level.

This makes Bangladesh vulnerable to rising sea levels as a result of climate change.

Flooding caused by rivers bursting their banks is a big problem in many areas.

About 20 million people living in low-lying coastal areas are at risk of being flooded out of their homes by rising water levels and tidal surges.

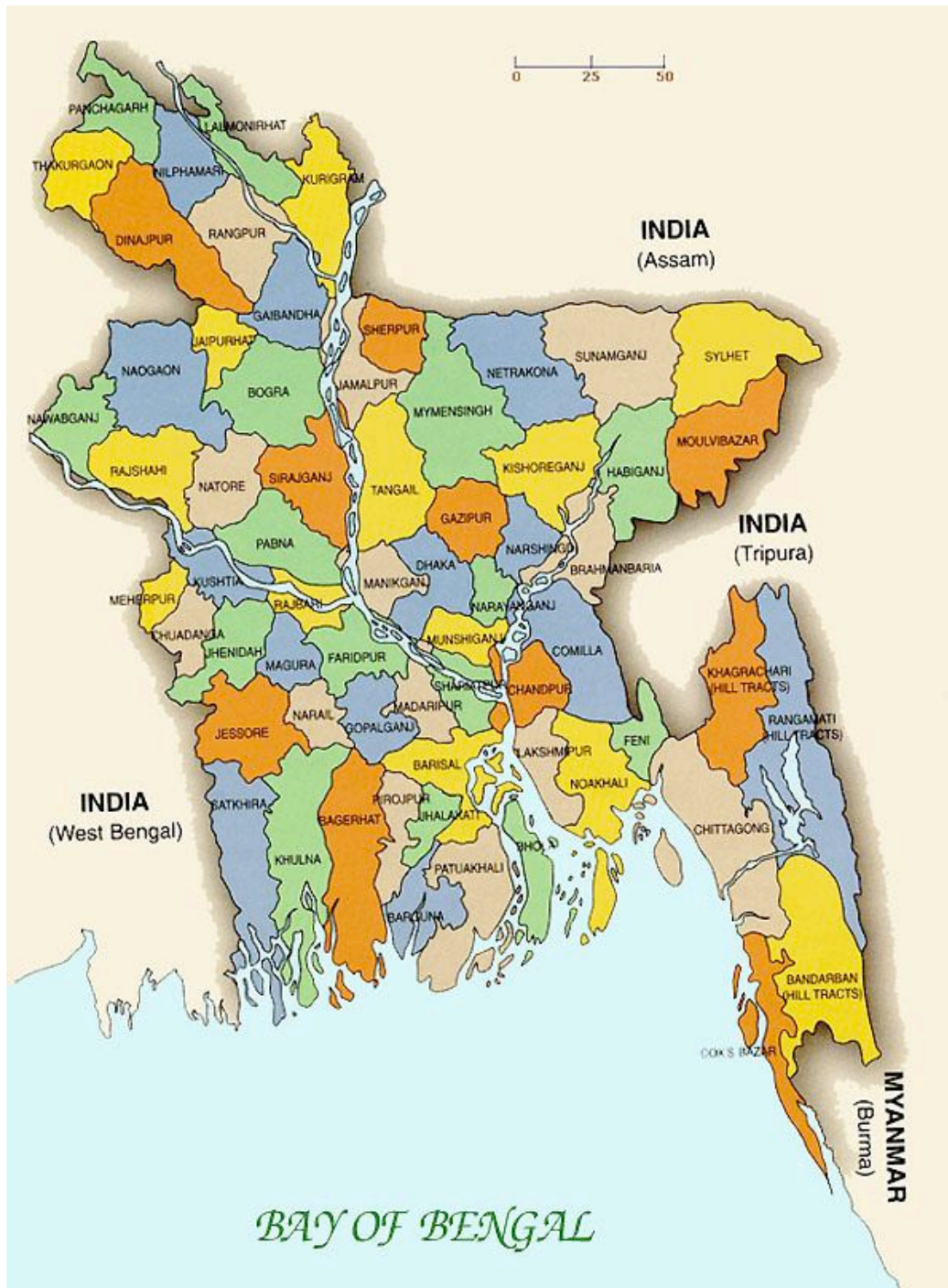
The capital, Dhaka, has population of about 16 million and is one of the largest cities in the world.

But 73% of Bangladesh's 164 million population still lives in rural areas.

Most of the population relies on subsistence farming. Rice is the staple crop and the country's main source of food.

Bangladesh ranked 146 out of 187 states listed in the 2011 UN Human Development Index.

According to the World Bank, 81% of the population lives in poverty.



**Administrative divisions of Bangladesh**

Source: <http://www.newspicalpictures.com/category/map-2/bangladesh-map/>

The adult literacy rate was 56% in 2009, according to UNESCO. It estimated that 61% of men could read and write, but only 51% of women.

**Bangla** or **Bengali** is spoken as a first language by 98% of the population. It is the official language of government.

Bangla is also spoken in the neighbouring West Bengal State of India, with which Bangladesh has close cultural and historical ties.

Bengalis in both countries love their language and rich culture. Poets are national heroes, known to everyone.

Most educated Bangladeshis still regard the city of Kolkata (formerly known as Calcutta), across the border in India, as the cultural capital of Bengal – a region that historically includes West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Many Bangladeshi families still have strong links to West Bengal, having left part of their family there when they fled clashes between Hindus and Muslims during the partition of India in 1947.

However, at a political level many Bangladeshis feel ambivalent about India. The intentions of this larger and more and more powerful neighbour are widely distrusted.

Several local languages are spoken in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in South-eastern Bangladesh and in the extreme north of the country, where the influence of India's neighbouring Assam region is pronounced. About 300,000 people in the troubled Chittagong Hill Tracts speak **Chakma**.

The main international language spoken is **English**. This is a legacy of nearly two centuries of British colonial rule.

Bangladesh achieved independence from British colonial rule as part of the Islamic state of Pakistan in 1947. The territory was then known as East Pakistan, but it was physically separated from the rest of Pakistan by India.

The teaching of English declined following independence from Pakistan in 1971 as Bangla was promoted for nationalist reasons.

However, English continues to be widely used in government, business and the media. It is also widely spoken among the educated elite.

English is now making a comeback. Many Bangladeshis regard fluency in the language as vital for getting well-paid jobs both at home and overseas.

About 90% of Bangladeshis are Sunni Muslim.

A further 9% are Hindu. There are small minorities of Christians and Buddhists.

Traditionally most Bangladeshis have defined themselves as 'Bengalis first and Muslims second'.

However, Islamic fundamentalism has been on the rise since the early 1990s.

Bangladesh split away from Pakistan after a successful armed uprising in 1971, which was backed by the Indian Air Force. This is known in Bangladesh as the War of Liberation.

Language and culture was a key factor in the liberation struggle. Bangladeshi nationalists advocated the use of Bangla as an official language instead of Urdu, the official language of Pakistan.

Nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism were the four pillars of Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution.

However, in 1988 Islam was made the state religion.

Post-independence politics have been marred by a bitter feud between the two main political dynasties in Bangladesh.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, served as the country's first president until his assassination by military officers in 1975.

He was the leader of Awami League, founded in 1949. His daughter, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, took over the party leadership after his death. She has been Prime Minister and leader of the government since 2009.

A rival political dynasty was founded by General Ziaur Rahman, a military hero of the 1971 revolt against Pakistan.

Ziaur Rahman, who is widely known as "General Zia," became the de facto military ruler of Bangladesh in 1975. He took the helm after several months of instability triggered by the killing of Mujibur Rahman.

Ziaur Rahman appointed some of Mujibur Rahman's assassins to senior government positions. This move created a rift between the families of the two men and has poisoned relations between them ever since.

Ziaur Rahman assumed the title of president in 1977 and ruled Bangladesh until his own assassination in 1981.

He founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the country's other main political movement in 1978.

The party is now led by Ziaur Rahman's widow, Khaleda Zia. She served as prime minister from 1991 to 1996 and again from 2001 to 2006. In early 2012, with the Awami League back in power, she was leader of the opposition.

The personal rivalry and animosity between Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia is intense and has coloured much of Bangladeshi politics over the past 20 years. Both women are in their late 60s.

Since independence, Bangladesh has either been ruled by the Awami League, the BNP or a military-led administration.

The army's most recent intervention in politics took place in 2007.

It formed a caretaker administration after the previous BNP-led government failed to hold fresh elections by the end of its parliamentary mandate. A military-led interim government organised fresh elections in 2008.

The Awami League scored a landslide victory, winning 49% of the popular vote and 263 of the 300 seats in parliament.

It returned to power in early 2009 with Sheikh Hasina as Prime Minister. This was her second term as head of government. She had earlier ruled Bangladesh from 1996 to 2001.

The ideological differences between the Awami League and the BNP are insignificant, but the animosity between their respective leaders is intense and extremely personal.

Sheikh Hasina blames General Zia and the BNP for being close to her father's murderers, for removing secularism from the constitution, and for rehabilitating collaborationist forces such as Jamaat-e-Islami, which formerly opposed independence from Pakistan.

The BNP and Khaleda Zia suggest in turn that Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League are insufficiently Muslim, and that they are in league with Hindu-dominated India.

Khaleda Zia filed corruption cases against Sheikh Hasina and her associates while she was in power. Sheikh Hasina has since retaliated in kind.

The next parliamentary elections are due in 2013.

Corruption is widespread at all levels of government in Bangladesh, especially in the police.

The country was rated 120 out of 183 countries listed in Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perception Index with a rating of 2.7 out of 10. Bangladesh once occupied the bottom rung of the index, but its performance has improved in recent years.

Every few years, Bangladesh suffers from devastating floods, most of which are triggered by cyclonic storms coming ashore from the Bay of Bengal.

Only 5% of the world's cyclonic storms form in the Bay of Bengal, but these cause 85% of the loss of life and property inflicted by all cyclones on the planet.

In 1991, a severe cyclone killed nearly 140,000 Bangladeshis and made up to 10 million homeless. It sent a six-metre high storm surge of sea water rushing inland.

Following that disaster, international donors helped Bangladesh to build a network of cyclone shelters along the coast and set up an early warning system for residents in vulnerable areas.

Regular TV and radio bulletins are issued as cyclones reach key stages of development in the Bay of Bengal. The government also passes warning messages down to local government officials.

At moments of extreme danger, sirens mounted on the cyclone shelters are sounded.

In 2009 the government used the mobile phone network to create an additional channel for distributing cyclone warning messages.

It began to broadcast SMS cyclone warning messages to all mobile phone owners living in danger zones as danger approached, urging them to urgently seek safety.

Casualties have been greatly reduced as a result of these precautions, but powerful storms continue to inflict heavy damage.



Earthquakes are rare, but when they do occur they can be extremely powerful.

Only seven earthquakes of over 8.5 magnitude have ever been recorded in the world, but two of those affected Bangladesh—in 1887 and again in 1950.

The country sits astride three major fault lines.

In September 2011 a 6.9 magnitude earthquake with its epicentre in Sikkim to the north rocked buildings in the capital Dhaka and elsewhere for up to two minutes.

According to Professor Humayun Akhter, Head of the Earth Observatory at Dhaka University, a 7.5 magnitude quake with an epicentre 50km from Dhaka would wreak havoc in the capital.

He estimated in September 2011 that such a quake would destroy 30% of all buildings in the city, killing 200,000 people and trapping a further 300,000 in the debris of collapsed buildings.

Famine has been a recurring phenomenon in Bangladesh for centuries.

However, there has not been a serious hunger crisis in the country since 1974, when over one million people died.

New varieties of rice, better farming techniques and improved early warning systems have boosted agricultural output.

In most years Bangladesh manages to achieve self-sufficiency in food.

Although most of Bangladesh is peaceful, a regional conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) near the Burmese border in the Southeast has been simmering for the past 40 years. This pits indigenous people from the region against settlers from other parts of Bangladesh and the army.

The government signed a peace agreement with the hill tribes in 1997, granting limited autonomy to the CHT.

However, the promise of self-rule for the CHT was never fulfilled and sporadic violence continues to plague the region.

Reports of human rights violations in the CHT are commonplace.

In late 2011, there were 28,000 registered refugees from Myanmar (Burma) living in two government-run camps in the South eastern district of Cox's Bazar.

Nearly all of the refugees were Muslims from the Rohingya ethnic group. They represented the remnants of an influx of 250,000 refugees from Myanmar in 1991.

The Bangladeshi government estimates that a further 200,000 to 300,000 Burmese live in Bangladesh without formal refugee status.

In October 2011 the Burmese government announced that it would take the Rohingya refugees back.

The Bangladeshi authorities were keen for them to leave, but by early 2012 there had been no reports of any forced repatriations.

The army has not attempted to intervene in politics since it returned Bangladesh to elected civilian government in 2008.

However, in 2010 more than 70 people, including civilians and army officers, were killed during a mutiny by the Bangladesh Rifles' (BDR) border force.

More than 2,100 BDR personnel were subsequently detained. According to media reports, more than 60 of these detainees died in custody.

The army and the police have a poor human rights record.

The Rapid Action Battalion, an elite anti-crime and anti-terrorism unit set up in 2004, has a particularly bad reputation. It is able to act in secrecy and with impunity.

According to Amnesty International, the Rapid Action Battalion has been implicated in the killing of at least 700 people since its formation. It has also been accused of torturing detainees.

In 2010, according to human rights organisations, law enforcement officials were responsible for 127 deaths, 101 of which were attributed to 'crossfire'.

The Rapid Action Battalion accounted for 65 of the crossfire killings, while regular police were responsible for a further 21. Combined security units of Rapid Action Battalion and police agents were responsible for a further 12 deaths.

## Bangladesh at a glance

<b>Population</b>	164 million (World Bank 2010)
<b>Main Language</b>	Bangla
<b>Other languages widely used in broadcasting</b>	English
<b>Gross National Income per capita</b>	\$624 (World Bank 2012)
<b>Adult Literacy (15+)</b>	56% (UNESCO 2009)
<b>Mobile phones</b>	87.9 million (BTRC February 2012)
<b>Mobile phone penetration (lines per 100 inhabitants)</b>	94% (urban) and 83% (rural) (NMS 2011)
<b>Mobile network coverage (population)</b>	98% (BTRC 2011)
<b>Internet users</b>	5.5 million (Internetworldstats.com December 2011)
<b>Internet subscribers</b>	3.1 million (BRTC February 2012)
<b>Ranking in UN Human Development Index 2011</b>	146 (out of 179)
<b>Ranking in Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index 2011/12</b>	129 (out of 179)

## **Media overview**

Television is the most popular source of news and entertainment in urban areas of Bangladesh.

It is also rapidly gaining ground in the countryside.

However, radio still commands large audiences in the rural areas, where 73% of Bangladeshis live.

Many rural families have no access to electricity and are too poor to afford a TV set. Radio ownership has fallen steadily in recent years and so have radio audiences.

The 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey, conducted by the global media marketing group AC Nielsen, found that radio listening had declined to 15% of the population in 2011 from 36% in 1999.

It also found that over the same 12-year period access to television in urban areas increased from 69% to 91%.

In rural areas, the proportion of the population watching television increased even more dramatically from 24% to 67%.

The 2011 Nielsen Survey indicated that Bangladeshis who still listen to radio are increasingly tuning in on their mobile phones rather than a traditional radio set.

It showed that 73% of radio listeners tuned into stations on their mobile phones, but only 34% still listened to programmes on a radio set.

This change in listening habits reflects the fact that young urban Bangladeshis, frequently listen to music broadcast by FM stations through earphones attached to their mobile handset.

However, one in five Bangladeshis do not watch TV or listen to radio at all.

The Nielsen survey indicated that 20% of the population has no access to any media whatsoever.

It found that 27% of females were unable to watch TV, listen to radio or reach any other media on a regular basis. 13% of males were in the same situation.

The government began to liberalise broadcasting in the late 1990s.

Unusually, it allowed private TV stations to operate before licensing private radio stations.

Bangladesh's first private satellite channel, **ATN Bangla**, began broadcasting on satellite in 1997.

But the first commercial radio station, **Radio Foorti**, only went on air in 2006.

The government-run radio network **Bangladesh Betar** and state-run **Bangladesh Television (BTV)** have both lost audiences to private sector competitors in the towns and cities.

However, state radio and TV still dominate the air waves at a national level.

They are still the only broadcasters that can be received easily in large swathes of the countryside, where the majority of Bangladeshis live.

Bangladesh Betar and BTV both strongly reflect the views of the government of the day. Their programming is widely regarded as dull and uninspired compared with that of their private sector competitors.

Mass circulation newspapers remain influential, especially in the main towns.

The 2011 National Media Survey found that 40% of Bangladeshi men read newspapers at least once a week. The figure for women was much lower at 14%.

This reflects lower literacy rates amongst women.

It also reflects the fact that men tend to control household incomes and that men get out and about much more than the women of the household. They therefore have more opportunity to buy newspapers.

Before the government allowed the first private television stations to go on air in 1997, newspapers were the only source of independent information in Bangladesh.

However, the liberalisation of the air waves, the proliferation of mobile phones and the spread of internet access, have dramatically opened up the media landscape since then.

Mobile telephone ownership has become widespread in both urban and rural areas following a rapid expansion of the mobile telecoms network in the early years of this century.

The 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey found that two thirds of all Bangladeshis over the age 15 owned a mobile handset with an active SIM card.

The Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said there were 87.9 million mobile phone subscribers in the country by the end of February 2012.

This figure implies that one in two Bangladeshis has a mobile phone. However many handset owners have SIM cards for more than one network, so the actual mobile penetration rate is undoubtedly lower.

Mobile phones are mainly used for voice conversations.

Very few handsets support the alphabet of the **Bangla** language, so the volume of text messaging is quite low.

According to the BTRC, the average volume of SMS messages sent in 2011 was 30 million per month.

This is the equivalent of one message for every three phones in use.

Nevertheless, mobile phones are already being used as a channel to broadcast information.

Since 2009 the government has issued cyclone warnings by SMS.

Members of the public can also dial a short code on any of Bangladesh's three mobile phone networks to hear a recording of the latest **BBC Bangla** news headlines. These are updated every hour.

Internet use is growing fast from a low base, but access to the internet is still restricted well-off people living in the main towns.

According to the website [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com) there were 5.5 million internet users in Bangladesh at the end of 2011 – equivalent to 3.5% of the country's population.

The BTRC reported in February 2012 that Bangladesh had 3.1 million internet subscribers, of whom nearly 3.0 million went online via the mobile telecoms network.

The website [www.socialbakers.com](http://www.socialbakers.com) which measures global internet usage, said more than 2.5 million Bangladeshis had signed up to Facebook by February 2012.

The most popular Bangladeshi news website is that of **Prothom Alo** (First Light), the country's top-selling newspaper [www.prothom-alo.com](http://www.prothom-alo.com).

The independent and widely respected news website [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com) follows close behind it.

News about Bangladesh is often faster to break online than on local TV or radio.

However, TV and radio are still widely regarded as the most authoritative sources of news and information.



A 2008 study by the Institute of Governance Studies at BRAC University, entitled *The State of Governance in Bangladesh*, found that state and private broadcasters both scored highly on credibility.

News on private TV was rated as authentic by 82% of respondents to the survey, while state-run BTV scored 78%.

Public confidence in the state media was noticeably lower in urban areas, where there is generally a greater choice of media.

The BRAC University study found that only 68% of urban residents considered government owned TV and radio to be authentic sources of information.

However, the credibility rating of state media in the countryside was much higher at 87%.

For many Bangladeshis in rural areas, the state radio network **Bangladesh Betar** is still the main source of news and information.

Bangladesh Betar runs 12 regional radio stations as well as a national radio service. It also runs a special Traffic Channel for Dhaka.

Its broadcasts on FM and Medium Wave cover the entire country.

Bangladesh's has only five private commercial radio stations. All of them are based in Dhaka. Their broadcasts on FM are primarily aimed at urban audiences.

Only two private radio stations have broad national coverage - **Radio Foorti** and **Radio Today**.

Both have relay transmitters in several provincial cities. Radio Today also has a network of regional studios which produce some local programming.

**Radio Amar** has one relay station in **Chittagong**, but **Metrowave** and **ABC Radio** - only broadcast to **Dhaka** and the surrounding area.

The government has so far licensed 14 community radio stations. The first two went on air in 2011. There are plans to establish more than 100 community stations across the country in due course.

Private TV stations only distribute their programmes by satellite and cable. Nevertheless, they have come to dominate broadcasting in the towns and cities.

**Channel-i** and **ATN Bangla** are the most popular private TV channels.

Government-run **BTV** is the only station that broadcasts free-to-air from terrestrial transmitters. As such it is the only TV station that can be seen by most people with access to television in rural areas.

However, BTV's hold on rural TV viewers is starting to loosen as more and more people in the countryside are switching to satellite television, which allows them to watch private and foreign channels.

The largest and most influential **Bangla** language daily newspaper is **Prothom Alo**. It sold 437,000 copies per day in early 2011, according to government statistics.

The newspaper's online version [www.prothom-alo.com](http://www.prothom-alo.com) has more than 800,000 readers, according to its editor. Many of these are members of the Bangladeshi diaspora living overseas.

Prothom Alo's stable mate, **The Daily Star**, is the largest circulation **English** language daily in Bangladesh. It sells over 40,000 copies per day and is influential in the ruling elite.

All of Bangladesh's national newspapers are published in **Dhaka**.

However, dozens of provincial dailies are published in several other cities, including **Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal, Bogra** and **Rangpur**.

Most private media outlets are broadly aligned with one of Bangladesh's two main parties; the Awami League, which is currently in power, or the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

The private media in Bangladesh is mostly owned by large business conglomerates, such as **Transcom**, **Square Group** and the **Beximco**.

These groups have extensive interests in manufacturing industry, trading and financial services as well as the media.

There are relatively few genuinely independent media outlets.

Many also allow the business interests of their owners to colour their news coverage.

Editors and journalists can face pressure or intimidation for opposing government policies, and reporting on sensitive issues such as corruption, crime, human rights abuses and illegal business practices.

Salaries are low, so many journalists are also open to financial inducements to slant their stories in favour of their paymasters or suppress embarrassing information.

Threats from political parties, police and military, extremist religious groups, and other powerful individuals, are relatively common.

Bangladesh was ranked 129<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries listed in the Reporters Sans Frontieres 2011-12 Press Freedom Index <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2011-2012,1043.html>.

According to The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org), 12 journalists were murdered in Bangladesh between 1992 and March 2012. Most of their killers escaped prosecution.

Three quarters of those who died were covering crime and/or corruption stories at the time.

Generally speaking, journalists and editors tread carefully, self-censoring themselves to avoid trouble.

The 2009 Right to Information (RTI) Act allows for freedom of access to information held by public organisations. This has improved the potential for investigative journalism, although so far few journalists have taken advantage of it.

Libel, sedition and reporting on national security issues all carry the risk of criminal prosecution.

Like other Bangladeshi citizens, journalists can be held for up to 90 days without trial under the 1974 Special Powers Act.

A code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists was issued by the Bangladesh Press Council, a statutory body controlled by the government, in 1993. It was amended in 2002.

Restrictions on media freedom have often increased during periods of political turmoil.

The authorities have occasionally tried to block access to some websites, citing religious and moral concerns.

According to Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org), the government blocked access to the popular social networking site Facebook for nine days in 2010 until it agreed to withdraw cartoons of the Islamic Prophet Mohammed and cartoons of certain Bangladeshi politicians.

The pro-opposition newspaper **Amar Desh** was closed for three months in June 2010 after publishing a report that accused the son of the prime minister of involvement in a corruption scandal. Its editor and main shareholder Mahmudur Rahman was arrested.

Rahman, a former energy adviser of the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP), was released nine months later.

Two private TV stations, **Channel 1** and **Jamuna TV**, have also been shut down by the current Awami League government since it came to power in 2008.

Jamuna TV, owned by the Jamuna business conglomerate, was banned in November 2009, after 35 days of test transmissions for operating without a licence.

Channel 1, whose owner has close links with the BNP, was forced to suspend broadcasting in April 2010 after the government accused it of violating unspecified rules.

The station is owned by businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, who has close ties to the eldest son of opposition leader and former Prime Minister Minister Khaleda Zia.

Wherever television is available, Bangladeshis have come to rely on TV rather than radio as their main source of news, information and entertainment.

By the end of 2011, there were 19 local TV channels available in Bangladesh, only three of which were controlled by the government.

Many Bangladeshis with a satellite dish also watch Indian channels broadcasting in **Bangla** and **Hindi**. The Indian soap operas on **Star TV** are particularly popular.

Over the years, a succession of governments has pledged to turn state TV and radio into independent public service broadcasters, but no convincing move has so far been made in this direction.

However, the government has agreed to allow the establishment of a handful of community radio stations.

The first two community radio stations opened in 2011 and the government has awarded licences to 12 others.

All will be operated by local NGOs.

Academic facilities for journalism training in Bangladesh are quite good.

The state universities of **Dhaka**, **Jahangirnagar**, **Jagannath**, **Chittagong** and **Rajshahi** all offer graduate and post-graduate courses on mass communication and journalism.

Some respected private universities, such as BRAC, the Independent University of Bangladesh, Stamford University, and Daffodils also offer courses in journalism and media studies.

In 2007 USAID set up the Journalism Training and Research Initiative (JATRI), a professional training centre for investigative journalism. It now forms part of BRAC University's Institute of Governance Studies.

## **Media Groups**

Many newspapers and radio and TV stations in Bangladesh are owned by business conglomerates with extensive interests in manufacturing industry, trading and financial services as well as the media.

The shares of some of these companies are traded on the Dhaka Stock Exchange, but most of them are controlled by rich and politically influential families.

The largest and most influential business groups with media interests are:

### **Transcom Group** [www.transcombd.com](http://www.transcombd.com)

Transcom owns **Prothom Alo**, the largest circulation **Bangla** language newspaper in Bangladesh.

It also owns **The Daily Star**, the largest and most respected English language daily in the country.

Transcom's broadcasting interests are represented by **ABC Radio**, a Dhaka-based news and current affairs FM station.

Transcom's media outlets are generally perceived as being politically neutral.

The conglomerate was founded as a family-run tea plantation business in 1885.

Its non-media business interests include electronics, mobile phones, pharmaceuticals, food and beverages. It owns the Bangladeshi franchises for Pepsi Cola, 7-Up, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut.

**Bashundhara Group** [www.bg.com.bd](http://www.bg.com.bd)

Bashundara Group owns two influential **Bangla** language daily newspapers; **Kaler Kantho** and **Bangladesh Protidin**, and an **English** language newspaper, **The Daily Sun**.

It also owns the bi-lingual news portal [www.BanglaNews24.com](http://www.BanglaNews24.com) - not to be confused with the more popular [www.Bdnews24.com](http://www.Bdnews24.com)

The conglomerate's media outlets are held through a publishing subsidiary called the East West Media Group.

Bashundhara Group began life in 1987 as a real estate company. It has since diversified into shopping malls, manufacturing industry and the media. It is a major producer of cement and paper products and bottles and distributes Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).

The Bashundhara Group website says the conglomerate intends to set up its own TV channel and radio station in due course.

The editorial line of the group's newspapers generally favours the ruling Awami League. Many of their news reports are seen as serving the group's own business interests.

**Jamuna Group** [www.jamunagroup-bd.com](http://www.jamunagroup-bd.com)

The Jamuna Group publishes the popular **Bangla** daily **Jugantor** and is trying to set up a TV station - **Jamuna TV**.

The TV station started broadcasting in 2009, but was shut down by the government after 35 days for operating without a licence.



The Jamuna Group was founded as an industrial manufacturing venture by businessman Nurul Islam in 1974.

Today it has interests in electronics, shoe and textile manufacturing, construction and chemicals. The conglomerate also owns Jamuna Future Park, one of Bangladesh's largest shopping malls.

Jamuna diversified into media with the establishment of **Jugantor** in 2002.

**Impress Group** [www.impressgroup.com.bd](http://www.impressgroup.com.bd)

Impress Group is a textiles, garment manufacturing and pharmaceuticals conglomerate which owns **Channel i**, one of Bangladesh's most popular private TV channels.

Its **Impress Telefilm** subsidiary also produces TV programmes for other Bangladeshi TV channels, such as BTV, ATN and Ekushey TV.

**Beximco Group** [www.beximco.net](http://www.beximco.net)

Beximco is one of the largest diversified industrial groups in Bangladesh

Its relatively modest media interests include the English language daily **The Independent** and the **Independent TV** channel.

Beximco's main business activities include pharmaceuticals, ceramics, textiles, garment manufacturing, real estate, and banking.

Beximco was founded in the 1970s by two brothers, Ahmed Sohail Fasiur Rahman and Ahmed Salman Fazlur Rahman. The latter is a close advisor to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed on private sector investment matters.

### **Multi Media Production Company**

This media group, founded by entrepreneur Mahfuzur Rahman owns two of Bangladesh's most popular private TV channels; **ATN Bangla** and **ATN News**.

ATN Bangla became Bangladesh's first private TV channel when it started broadcasting by satellite in 1997.

Rahman made his initial fortune in the garment manufacturing industry.

### **Diganta Group**

Diganta Group owns **Naya Diganta**, a **Bangla** language daily newspaper, and **Diganta TV**, a private television channel launched in 2008.

Politically this media group is a strong supporter of the Jamaat-e-Islami Islamic fundamentalist party.

### **Square Group**

The Square Group is a large industrial conglomerate which launched Bangladesh's newest TV channel, **Maasranga TV**, in 2011.

It has invested heavily in hiring leading media personalities to run the new station and has spent lavishly on equipping its studios.

The Square Group, founded by business magnate Samson Chowdhury, also has interests in pharmaceuticals, textiles, food processing and healthcare.

## **Radio overview**

Radio audiences in Bangladesh have fallen steadily in recent years as people have turned to television instead.

The 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographics Survey showed that only 15% of the population still listened to the radio once every seven to 10 days, down from 36% in 1995.

The same survey indicated that 91% of people in urban areas and 67% of people in rural areas now had access to television.

Radio stations in Bangladesh are still largely still owned and controlled by the government.

The first private radio station, **Radio Foorti**, only began broadcasting in 2006.

By early 2012, there were just five privately owned commercial FM stations on air and the community radio movement was in its infancy.

The five private commercial radio stations are all based in **Dhaka**. They are:

- **Radio Foorti**
- **Radio Today**
- **ABC Radio**
- **Radio Amar**
- **Metrowave**

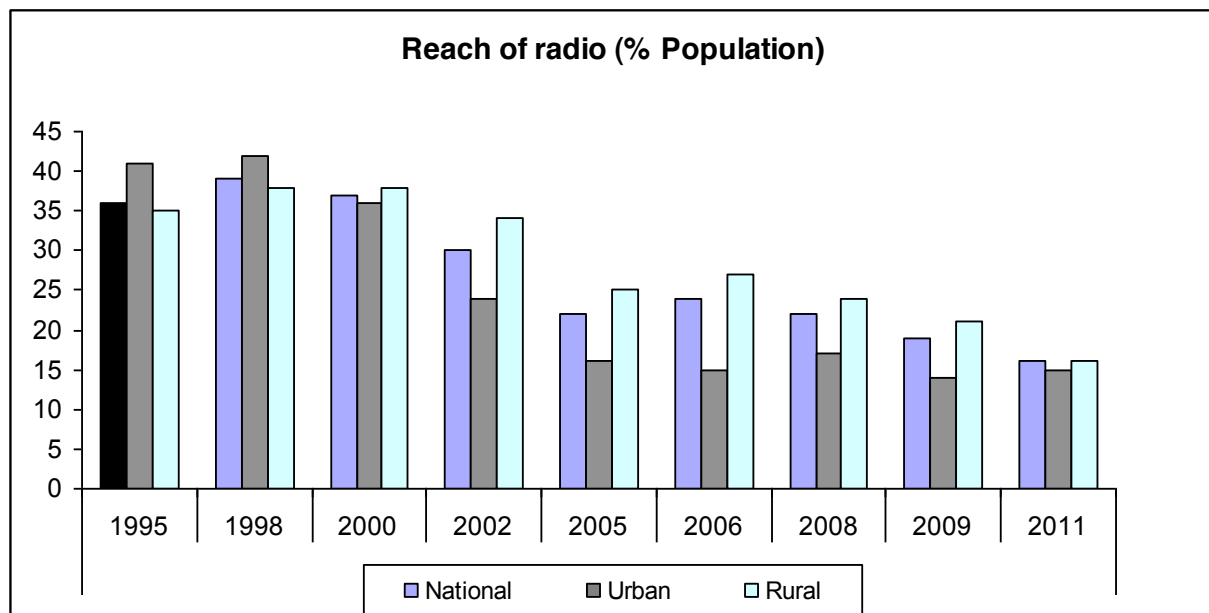
State-owned **Bangladesh Betar** is the country's only nationwide radio network.

It operates a chain of 12 regional radio stations which link up with Dhaka for national news bulletins and other networked programmes, plus a Traffic Channel for commuters in the capital.

Bangladesh Betar's broadcasts on Medium Wave and FM reach all parts of the country.

However, Bangladesh Betar's news and current affairs coverage is tightly controlled by the government and its programmes are often dull and uninspired compared with those of other broadcasters.

Repeated pledges by government leaders to transform Bangladesh Betar from a government mouthpiece into an independent public service broadcaster have so far come to nothing.



*(Source : NMDS 2011)*

Most of the private FM stations transmit music and entertainment programmes aimed at an urban youth audience.

The notable exception is **ABC Radio**, a talk station which targets a slightly older audience with a strong diet of news and current affairs.

ABC Radio is owned by Transcom, the same business group that owns **Prothom Alo** and **The Daily Star**, Bangladesh's leading newspapers in **Bangla** and **English** respectively.

**Radio Foorti** and **Radio Today** both have a network of FM relay transmitters in several provincial cities. This gives them broader national coverage.

Radio Today also has studios in eight provincial cities which produce some local programming.

Radio Amar broadcasts in **Dhaka** and **Chittangong**.

**ABC Radio** and **MetroWave** only transmit from Dhaka.

According to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographics Survey, Radio Foorti is the most popular FM radio station in Bangladesh, with 47% of the national FM radio audience. It was followed by **Radio Today** with 28%.

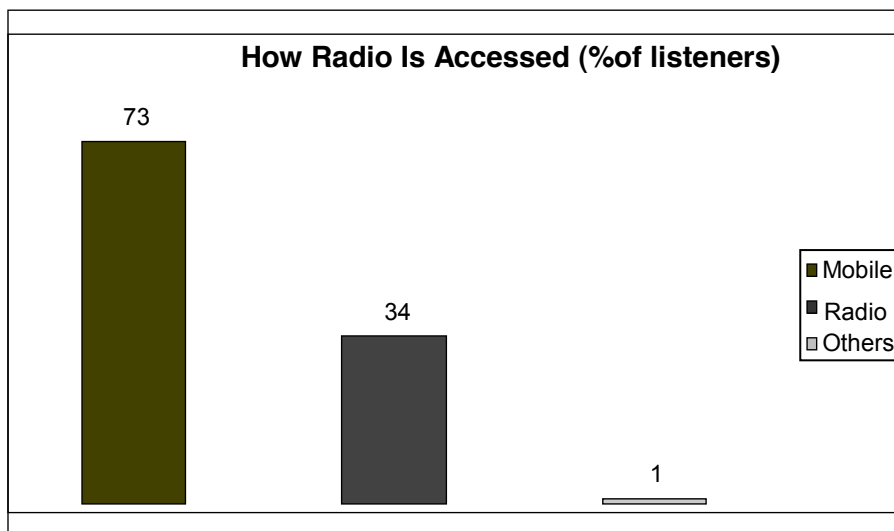
The survey found that where listeners have a choice, they regard the private FM stations as being more informative and entertaining than Bangladesh Betar.

The government has so far licensed 14 community radio stations. The first two went on air in 2011.

Although radio ownership has declined in recent years, more and more Bangladeshi radio listeners are tuning into programmes on their mobile phones.

In fact, mobile phones have become the preferred method of accessing radio in Bangladesh, especially for young people on the move in search of music and entertainment.

The 2011 Nielsen Survey found that 73% of radio listeners used their mobile phones to tune in to programmes, whereas only 34% listened on a conventional radio set.



*Source: Nielsen Media and Demographics Survey 2011*

Several international broadcasters target Bangladesh with broadcasts in **Bangla** and **English**.

They attract listeners because Bangladesh Betar is viewed by most people as little more than a crude mouthpiece of the incumbent government.

**BBC Bangla, Voice of America (VOA), Radio Deutsche Welle** and **All India Radio** are all respected as sources of independent news, but they command relatively small audiences.

BBC programmes in Bangla and English are relayed on FM by Bangladesh Betar's FM 100 station in Dhaka.

BBC Bangla programmes are also relayed twice a day by six of the state broadcaster's regional stations.

Some VOA Bangla programmes are relayed by Radio Today and Radio Amar.

According to the 2011 Nielsen survey, 5% of radio listeners tune in to the BBC, and only 4% to VOA.

Radio Deutsche Welle and All India Radio can only be heard on Short Wave. Their audience figures are even lower.

Several internet radio stations have been launched in Bangladesh since 2010.

These include:

- [www.lemon24.com](http://www.lemon24.com),
- [www.oniyom.com](http://www.oniyom.com),
- [www.radio2fun.com](http://www.radio2fun.com),
- [www.radiodhaka.net](http://www.radiodhaka.net),
- [www.radiogoongoon.com](http://www.radiogoongoon.com).

They broadcast popular Bangla songs, and regular news bulletins. However, they only reach relatively affluent members of the educated elite who have access to the internet and Bangladeshis in the diaspora.



Community radio is only just coming into existence.

The first community radio station, **RadioLokobetar**, began test transmissions in the town of **Barguna** in Barisal division in June 2011. It is run by the NGO, Mass Line Media Center.

In October 2011, a second community station, **Radio Padma**, started broadcasting in **Rajshahi**. It is run by another NGO, the Centre for Communication and Development.

By the end of 2011, the government had issued a total of 14 licences to community radio stations. Two were on air and another four had begun test broadcasts.

Each one is being set up and managed by a different civil society organisation.

The Community Radio advocacy movement was started in 1998 by a network of NGOs and like-minded civil society organizations called the Bangladesh NGO Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC).

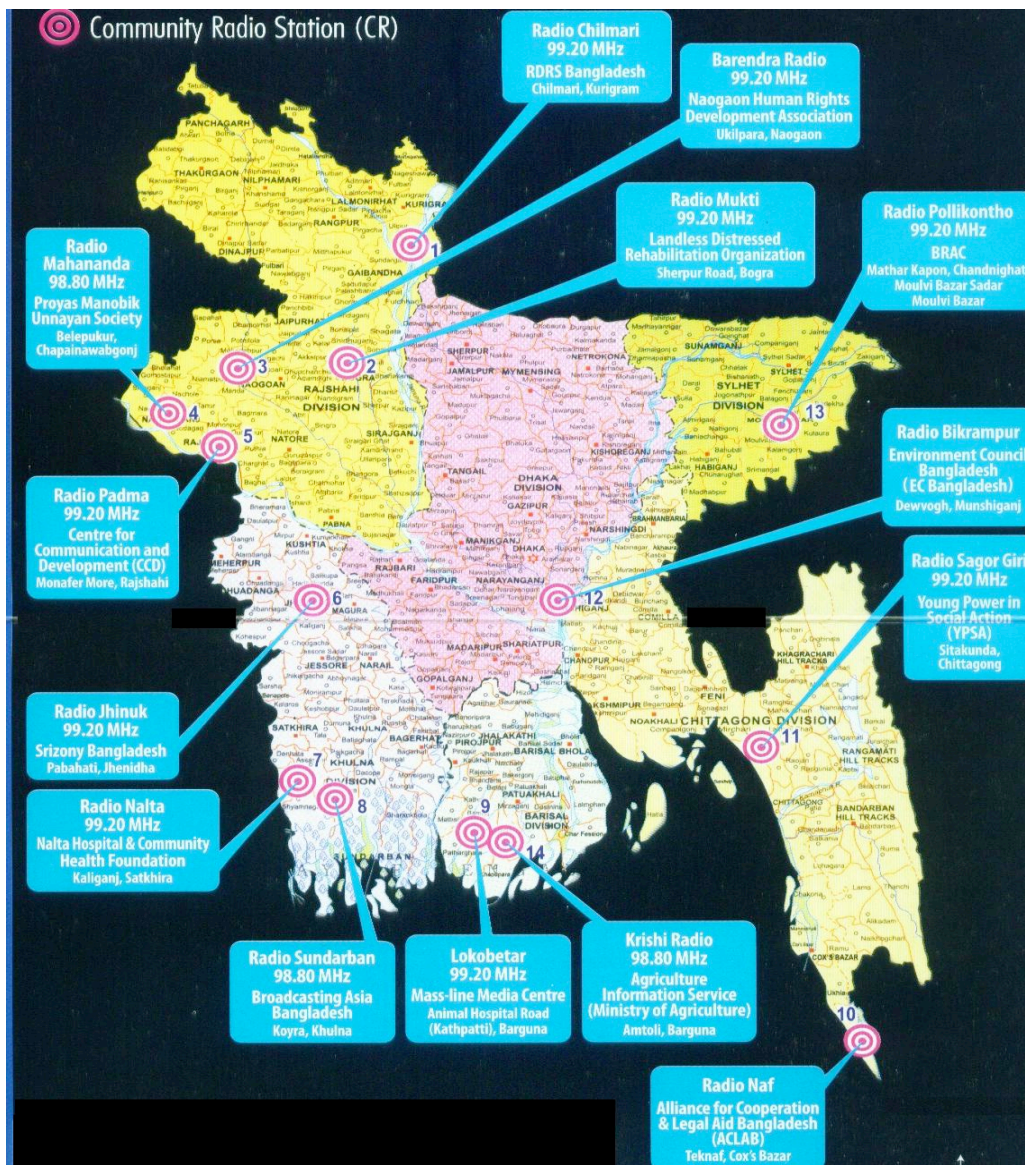
This pressure group argued that community radio would help to reduce poverty, eliminate social exclusion, empower marginalized rural groups and encourage the active participation of disadvantaged sections of the population in development.

The government approved the 'Community Radio Installation, Broadcast and Operation Policy 2008' (Bangladesh Gazette, 12 March 2008).

The National Regulatory Commission on Broadcasting subsequently proposed that a total of 116 community radio stations be established across the country.

### Community radio stations approved by the government in 2011

Sl. No.	Name of radio and Frequency (where available)	Name and address of organisation which will run the radio
01	<b>Krishi Radio</b> , 98.80MHz	Agriculture Information Service (Ministry of Agriculture), Amtoli, Barguna
02	<b>Radio Chilmari</b> , 99.20MHz	RDRS Bangladesh, Chilmari, Kurigram
03	<b>Lokobetar</b> , 99.20MHz	Mass-line Media Center, Amtoli Hospital Road, (Kathpatti), Barguna
04	<b>Radio Nalta</b> , 99.20MHz	Nalta Hospital @ Community Health Foundation, Kaliganj, Sathkhira
05	<b>Radio Mukti</b> , 99.20MHz	Landless Distressed Rehabilitation Organization, Sherpur Road, Bogra
06	<b>Radio Pollikontho</b> , 99.20MHz	BRAC Mathar Kapon, Chandnighat, Moulvibazar Sadar
07	<b>Barendro Radio</b> , 99.20MHz	Naogaon Human Rights Development Association, Ukilpara, Naogaon
08	<b>Radio Sagor Giri</b> , 99.20 MHz	Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), Sitakunda, Chittagong
09	<b>Radio Mahananda</b> , 98.80MHz	Proyas Manobik Unnayan society, Belepukur, Chapainawabgonj
10	<b>Radio Padma</b> , 99.20MHz	Center for Communication and Development (CCD), Monafer More, Rajshahi
11	<b>Radio Jhinuk</b> , 99.20MHz	Srizony Bangladesh, Pabahati, Jhenidha
12	<b>Radio Bikrampur</b>	Environment Council Bangladesh (EC Bangladesh), Dewvogh, Munshiganj
13	<b>Radio Sundarban</b> , 98.80MHz	Broadcasting Asia of Bangladesh, Koyra, Khulna
14	<b>Radio Naf</b>	Alliance for Co-operation and Legal Aid Bangladesh (ACLAB), Teknaf, Cox's Bazar



**Location of authorised community radio stations**

Source: BNNRC 2011

## Radio stations

Bangladesh Betar [www.betar.org.bd](http://www.betar.org.bd)



Bangladesh Betar is the state-run radio network. It is the only radio service that reaches the whole of the country.

The flagship Home Service is broadcast from the main studios in **Dhaka**.

Bangladesh Betar also operates 12 regional stations in the following cities:

**Bandarban**

**Barisal**

**Chittagong**

**Comilla**

**Cox's Bazar**

**Dhaka**

**Khulna**

**Rajshahi**

**Rangamati**

**Rangpur**

**Sylhet**

**Thakurgaon**

These stations transmit on both FM and Medium Wave

In addition, Bangladesh Betar runs the **Traffic Channel** in **Dhaka**. This broadcasts traffic updates to commuters in the capital on 88.8 and 103.2 FM.

Most Bangladesh Betar programmes are in **Bangla**, but some, including several daily news bulletins, are in **English**.

National news bulletins and other networked programmes are transmitted from Dhaka and relayed by the other centres.

Some local language news bulletins and programmes are produced in **Chakma, Marma** and **Tipra** for the tribes living in the Chittangong Hill Tracts.

These are broadcast by the Bangladesh Betar local stations in **Bandarban, Rangamati** and **Cox's Bazar**.

News bulletins are broadcast every hour.

Special programmes for farmers are broadcast daily at 06.25 in the morning and between 18.05 and 20.00 at night.

Bangladesh Betar also produces an external service. This broadcasts on Short Wave in **Bangla, English, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic** and **Nepali** to Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Bangladesh Betar started life in 1939 as a regional station of All India Radio, broadcasting from Dhaka.

After the partition of India in 1947, it became Radio Pakistan Dhaka.

At independence from Pakistan in 1971 Bangladesh Betar assumed its present identity.

Bangladesh Betar relays the **BBC World Service** in **English** and **BBC Bangla** for 12 hours per day on its **FM 100** station in **Dhaka**.

BBC Bangla's morning and afternoon programmes are also relayed by the Bangladesh Betar local stations in six other cities.

Center	Frequency (kHz)	Meter	Power (kW)	Broadcast Time(Local)
Dhaka-Ka	693	432.90	1000	0630-1210 and 1430-2330
Dhaka-kha	630	476.19	100	0000-0300, 0630-0745 and 0900-2310
Dhaka-Ga	1170	256.41	20	1500-1700
Chittagong	873	343.64	100	0630-1000 and 1200-2310

Rajshahi	1080	277.77	10	0630-1000 and 1200-2310
	846	354.60	100	0630-1000 and 1200-2310
Khulna	558	537.63	100	0630-1000 and 1200-2310
Rangpur	1053	284.90	20	0630-1000 and 1400-2310
Sylhet	963	311.52	20	0630-1000 and 1400-2310
Barisal	1287	233.10	10	1045-1715
Thakurgaon	999	300.30	10	1550-2310
Rangamati	1161	258.39	10	1130-1630
Cox's Bazar	1314	228.31	10	1145-1645
Bandarban	1431	209.64	10	1130-1630
Comilla	1413	212.31	10	1600-2310

### Bangladesh Betar Medium Wave transmitters

Source: Bangladesh Betar website

Center	Frequency (MHz)	Meter	Power (KW)	Broadcast Time
FM100, Dhaka	100.0	3.00	3	1300-1600
FM, Dhaka	97.6	3.07	5	0630-1200; 1415-2315
FM 88.8, Traffic Channel	88.8	3.38	10	0800-2000
FM 90.0, Traffic Channel	90.0	3.33	10	0800-2000
FM (Home Service), Dhaka	103.2	2.9	5	1730-2200
FM, Chittagong	105.5	2.85	2	0630-1000; 1900-2310
FM, Khulna	102.0	2.94	1	0630-1000; 1900-2310
FM, Sylhet	105.0	2.86	1	0630-1000; 1900-2310
FM, Rajshahi	104.0	2.88	5	0630-1000; 1900-2310
	105.0	2.86	1	0630-1000; 1900-2310
FM, Rangpur	105.0	2.86	1	0630-1000; 1900-2310

FM, Comilla	101.2	2.96	2	0630-1000; 1700-2310
FM, Thakurgoan	92.0	3.26	5	1600-2310

### Bangladesh Betar FM broadcasts

Source: Bangladesh Betar website

Director General (news)- Narayan Chandra Sen

Tel: +880 2 8115072

+880 2 8113356

+880 2 8115079

+880 2 8115036

Email: [cnobetar@dhaka.net](mailto:cnobetar@dhaka.net)

Address: Bangladesh Betar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

Radio Foorti [www.radiofoorti.fm](http://www.radiofoorti.fm)



Radio Foorti is the largest private radio station in Bangladesh.

It broadcasts on 88.0 FM in **Dhaka** and reaches a large audience in the interior through relay stations in the following seven provincial cities:

**Barisal**

**Chittagong (98.4 FM)**

**Cox's Bazar**

**Khulna**

**Mymensingh**

**Rajshahi**

**Sylhet(89.8 FM)**

According to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographics Survey, Radio Foorti commands a 47% share of the total FM radio audience in Bangladesh.

Most of its programming consists of music and entertainment.

The station plays a wide variety of music, ranging from Bengali classics to the latest songs released by top Bangladeshi artists, along with some international tracks.

Many programmes are inter-active, relaying phone calls and text messages from listeners.

The station first went on in Dhaka in 2006. Since then its FM coverage has progressively been extended to other major cities.

Radio Foorti is owned by the MGH Group. This is also has interests in transport, logistics, aviation services, banking and information technology.

Chief Executive -Daniel Afzalur Rahman

Tel: +880 2 8835747

+880 2 8835748

Email: [Daniel.rahman@radiofoorti.fm](mailto:Daniel.rahman@radiofoorti.fm)

Address: Radio Foorti, Landmark (8<sup>th</sup> floor), 12-14 Gulshan North C/A, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212



Radio Today 89.6 FM [www.radiotodaybd.fm](http://www.radiotodaybd.fm)



Radio Today is a music and entertainment station that broadcasts on FM from Dhaka and seven other cities across Bangladesh.

It claims to reach a potential audience of more than 120 million people across the country.

Radio Today plays popular Bangladeshi music.

It has subsidiary stations which produce several hours of local programming each day in the following provincial cities:

**Bogra**

**Chittagong**

**Khulna**

**Sylhet**

**Barisal**

**Cox's Bazar**

**Mymensingh**

All broadcast on the same frequency – 89.6 FM.

Radio Today is owned by Radio Broadcasting FM (Bangladesh) Co. Ltd., a company controlled by a businessman with strong connections with the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP). It first went on air in 2006.

The station also rebroadcasts two news bulletins per day from **Voice of America (VOA) Bangla**.

Chief News Editor - Rashidul Islam

Tel : + 880 2 8829293

Email : [info@radiotodaydhaka.com](mailto:info@radiotodaydhaka.com)

Address: Radio Today, Awal Centre (13<sup>th</sup> and 19th Floors), 34 Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-121 3

Radio Amar [www.radioamar.com](http://www.radioamar.com)



Radio Amar is a private radio station that broadcasts round the clock on 88.4 FM in **Dakha** and 101.4 FM in **Chittagong**.

It carries news, traffic and weather updates, business news, Bangla and English music and phone-in programmes. It also relays 30 minutes of programming from **Voice of America (VOA) Bangla** every evening.

Radio Amar began broadcasting in 2007.

The station is owned by the Uniwave Broadcasting Co. Ltd

Chief Executive - Zulfiquer Ahmed

Tel: + 880 2 9886800

+880 2 9861133

+880 2 8832989

Address: Uniwave Broadcasting Company Ltd., Silver Tower (12th Floor), 52 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka

**ABC Radio FM 89.2** <http://abcradiobd.fm>



ABC Radio is Bangladesh's only privately operated news and current affairs radio station.

It is based in **Dhaka** and covers a potential audience of 40 million people living within 80 km of the capital.

ABC Radio is owned by **Transcom**, the industrial conglomerate which also publishes two of Bangladesh's leading newspapers; **Prothom Alo** and **The Daily Star**.

This linkage gives ABC Radio access to the newspapers' network of more than 240 reporters and correspondents countrywide.

ABC radio was launched in 2009 and is on air 24 hours a day. There are news bulletins every hour.

According to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey, ABC Radio reaches 13% of all FM radio listeners.

It can be heard clearly as far south as Comilla and Chandpur, as far north as Tangail and as far west as Faridpur.

Head of News - M. Sanullah

Tel: +880 2 8142038

+880 2 8189307-10

Email : [news@abcradiobd.fm](mailto:news@abcradiobd.fm)  
[program@abcradiobd.fm](mailto:program@abcradiobd.fm)

Address: ABC Radio, 99 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka Trade Center, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka

**MetroWave** [www.metrowave-bd.com](http://www.metrowave-bd.com)

MetroWave is a private music and entertainment radio station based in **Dhaka**.

Under the terms of its broadcasting license, the station is required to relay some government news programmes and speeches by the Prime Minister and President.

MetroWave is on air on 1170 Khz Medium Wave from 07.30 until 10.30 and again from 12.00 to 15.00. Its does not appear to broadcast on FM.

Managing Director - Emran Mahmud

Tel : + 880 2 9881131

Email : [info@metrowave-bd.com](mailto:info@metrowave-bd.com)

Address: MetroWave, Electros house (9<sup>th</sup> floor), 18 Kamal Araturk avenue, Banani, Dhaka

**BBC Bangla** [www.bbc.co.uk/bengali](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bengali)

BBC Bangla is the Bengali language service of the BBC. It is aimed at Bengali speakers in both Bangladesh and India.

BBC Bangla broadcasts to Bangladesh on Short Wave and FM for two hours per day and online through its website.

Programming consists of news, current affairs, sports, entertainment and discussion programmes.

From 2005 to 2010, BBC Bangla broadcast a weekly TV and radio discussion programme called *Sanglap* (Dialogue) in association with Bangladesh's **Channel i** satellite TV station.

This popular programme aimed to initiate constructive public debate and encourage greater accountability from government and authority figures.

It brought ordinary people face-to-face with influential politicians and business leaders and gave them an opportunity to ask questions about issues that matter to them.

*Sanglap* was broadcast from different locations around Bangladesh and claimed a regular audience of 21 million.

It inspired several other private TV stations in Bangladesh to launch similar discussion programmes.

BBC Bangla is relayed on FM by Bangladesh Betar in Dhaka on its **FM 100** station. This also relays BBC World Service in **English** for 10 hours per day.

In addition, BBC Bangla is relayed by the Bangladesh Betar local FM stations in:

**Chittagong** (105.0 FM)

**Khulna** (105.4 FM)

**Rajshahi** (105.4 FM)

**Sylhet** (105.0 FM)

**Rangpur** (105.4 FM)

**Comilla** (101.2 FM)

Since 2010 BBC Bangla has also offered a dial-in news update service to mobile phone users, on Bangladesh's three largest mobile phone networks.

By dialing the short code 16262 members of the public can listen to a recording of the latest BBC headlines in Bangla at any time of day and leave their own comments if they wish.

The news headlines are updated every hour.

BBC Bangla has journalists based in **Dhaka, Kolkata and Delhi**.

BBC Dhaka Office

Tel: +880 2 9130996

+880 2 9130997

+880 2 9130672

Address: BBC, Dhanshiri Apartments, Flat No. D 602, 35 Indira Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

BBC Bangla Editor – Sabir Mustafa

Telephone: +44 20 7557 1840

Email: [bengali@bbc.co.uk](mailto:bengali@bbc.co.uk)

Address: BBC Bangla Service, Bush House, PO Box 76, Strand, London WC2B 4PH, UK

**Voice of America (VOA)** [www.voanews.com/bangla/news](http://www.voanews.com/bangla/news)

VOA Bangla is the Bengali language service of the US international radio station **Voice of America (VOA)**. It transmits to Bangladesh and India on Short Wave for seven hours per week.

In 2009 VOA Bangla said its radio broadcasts to Bangladesh reached 2.6 million people and that its overall audience, including TV and the internet, was 10 million.

VOA Bangla produces a 10-12 minute TV programme every week which is aired by the Bangladeshi private satellite broadcaster **NTV**.

Two of VOA Bangla's daily radio news bulletins are relayed on FM in Bangladesh by Radio Today from transmitters in the following cities:

**Barisal**

**Bogra**

**Chittagong**

**Cox's Bazar**

**Dhaka**

**Khulna**

**Mymensingh**

**Sylhet**

**Radio Amar** also broadcasts a 30-minute segment of VOA Bangla programming at 22.00 every evening from its transmitters in **Dhaka** and **Chittagong**.

In addition, Radio Amar broadcasts VOA Bangla's one-hour call-in show *Hello Washington* every Wednesday.

VOA Bangla Managing Editor Roquia Haider

Email: [rhaider@voanews.com](mailto:rhaider@voanews.com)

Address: VOA Bangla Service, 330 Independence Avenue, Washington, DC 20457



## **Television overview**

Over the past decade television has emerged as the most powerful channel of news and entertainment in Bangladesh.

It has displaced radio and newspapers to become the country's main source of reliable information.

The 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey found that 84% of urban households and 43% of rural households in Bangladesh owned a television set.

The same survey showed that 74% of Bangladeshis aged 15 and over watch television at least once every seven to 10 days.

The rise of television has been stimulated by a boom in private TV channels, since ATN Bangla became the first private commercial TV station to receive a license in 1997.

Seventeen private TV channels have begun broadcasting to Bangladesh by satellite and cable since then.

They generally provide more attractive and entertaining programmes than the state-run **Bangladesh Television (BTV)** network.

However, BTV has maintained a strong hold on viewers in rural areas since it is the only TV network that broadcasts free-to-air from terrestrial transmitters.

The 2011 Nielsen survey showed that 83% of TV owners in urban areas have access to private TV channels via satellite or cable, but whereas only 39% of TV owners in the countryside do so.

However, more and more rural households with access to some form of electricity supply are acquiring satellite dishes. As a result, BTV's former monopoly of rural television audiences is being gradually eroded.

Satellite TV channels broadcasting from India in **Hindi** and **Bengali** are popular for their soap operas, films and sports coverage.

**ETV Bangla**, an Indian satellite channel based in **Kolkata**, **ZTV**, **Star Plus**, **Sony TV**, and **Zee Cinema** are among the most popular Indian entertainment channels.

**Doordarshan**, **BBC**, **CNN**, and **ETV Bangla**, are popular satellite channels for news.

TV channels charge the highest rates for advertising between 19.00 and 23.00, suggesting that this is also the peak viewing period.

Daytime TV audiences mainly consist of housewives watching soap operas.

When their menfolk come home from work in the evening, the TV set is often switched over to news and sports channels.

There are no dedicated sports channels in Bangladesh, but televised football and cricket matches carried by foreign channels are very popular.

Talk shows have become popular in the past three years, in response to the popularity of the **BBC Bangla** TV discussion programme ***BBC Sanglap***. This ran from 2005 to 2010 on **Channel i**.

Every TV channel now broadcasts at least one talk show per week and these programmes cause considerable debate nationally.

Some TV discussion programmes have been criticised for promoting the views of a particular political party or the channel's owner, but others are very professionally produced and presented.

There are two private TV channels devoted solely to news – **ATN News** and **Shomoy**.

Most of the other TV channels broadcast a mix of news, talk shows, reality shows, music shows, dramas, movies and other forms of entertainment.

The majority broadcast hourly news bulletins throughout the day and a flagship news show in the evening.

Most also air programmes about development issues such as health, agriculture, and education.

**Islamic TV**, however, carries only religious news and discussions.

Viewers in the main cities can access more than 70 TV channels by cable. There are hundreds of different cable networks in Bangladesh.

Monthly cable subscriptions cost between 150 and 500 Taka, (\$2.0 to \$6.50). They can easily be afforded by a middle-income family.

The extension of mains power supplies, solar power and the availability of low cost TV sets have substantially increased access to television over the past decade.

Rising incomes and the emergence of a large middle class have meanwhile made commercial television, based on the sale of advertising, extremely profitable.

Many of Bangladesh's private TV channels have been set up by the country's largest industrial conglomerates such as Beximco, Square Group and Impress Group. Many of these business groups also own newspapers.

In early 2012, there were three state-run TV channels and 16 private channels on air in Bangladesh. Government licenses had been granted for a further six private channels.

According to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey, **ATN-Bangla** and **Channel-i** are the most popular TV channels overall.

However, individual programmes on other channels may have higher ratings at certain times of day.

The Nielsen survey identified **ATN Bangla's** evening news as the most watched TV programme in the country.

It rated **NTV** as the third most popular station. It has three channels which broadcast a mixture of news, entertainment, reality shows and discussion programmes.

People in rural areas without access to satellite connections have no option other than state-run terrestrial channel **BTV**.

BTV is Bangladesh's largest TV station in terms of its studios, staff, equipment and countrywide coverage.

It claims that its terrestrial broadcasts cover 95% of the population.

BTV's flagship national channel is broadcast from studios in **Dhaka**. It is normally on air for 18 hours a day.

BTV's regional studios in **Chittagong** produce a small amount of regional news and programming for Southeastern Bangladesh. This replaces national network programming in Chittagong for up to two hours every night.

In January 2011 BTV launched a third parliamentary channel, **BTV Sangsad**.

This broadcasts proceedings from parliament and discussion programmes about important national topics. The channel is on air for three hours per day whenever parliament is in session.

BTV also runs an international channel, **BTV World**. This broadcasts by satellite 24 hours a day to Asia, Australasia and the Middle East.

Terrestrial TV channels can easily be taken off air by the authorities – as Ekushey TV discovered to its cost in 2002.

Ekushey was shut down for four years by an incoming Bangladesh National Party (BNP) government which perceived the station as being overtly in favour of the opposition Awami League.

It only resumed broadcasting on satellite in 2006

Ekushey's experience has made other TV channels wary of terrestrial broadcasting.

Unlike radio stations, which are licensed by the Ministry of Information, TV channels in Bangladesh are regulated by the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

They require a 'permission to broadcast letter' from the Ministry of Information, but BTRC issues their license.

## **Television stations**

**Bangladesh Television (BTV)** [www.btv.gov.bd](http://www.btv.gov.bd)



Bangladesh TV (BTV) is the national state TV network.

Its main channel is the most watched TV channel in Bangladesh, largely because it is the only TV channel that can be received without a satellite dish in rural areas.

BTV claims that its transmitter network covers 95% of the population. Its main channel is on air for 18 hours per day from 07.00 to 01.00.

BTV also operates a small regional television station in the South-eastern port city of Chittagong. This broadcasts up to two hours of local programmes in the evening.

In 2004, BTV launched an international satellite channel **BTV World**. This broadcasts round the clock and can be seen throughout Asia and the Middle East.

Its latest venture is a parliamentary channel, **BTV Sangsad**.

Launched in January 2011, BTV Sangsad broadcasts for three hours per day whenever parliament is in session. It carries parliamentary debates and discussion programmes on topics of national importance.

Most BTV programmes are in **Bangla**, but some are in **English**.

According to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey, the proportion of TV viewers who tune in to BTV is higher in rural areas (92%) than in urban areas (80%).

However, the same survey indicated that BTV's audience has declined across the board in recent years in the face of competition from private TV channels.

The Nielsen survey ranked *Ittyadi*, a magazine entertainment programme as BTV's most popular programme.

BTV's flagship evening news programme in Bangla scores high ratings and its Friday night movies are also very popular.

State television started broadcasting in East Pakistan in 1964. BTV was created after Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan in 1971.

BTV has transmitters in **Dhaka** and **Chittagong** and relay stations in the following locations:

**Natore**

**Sylhet**

**Khulna**

**Rangpur**

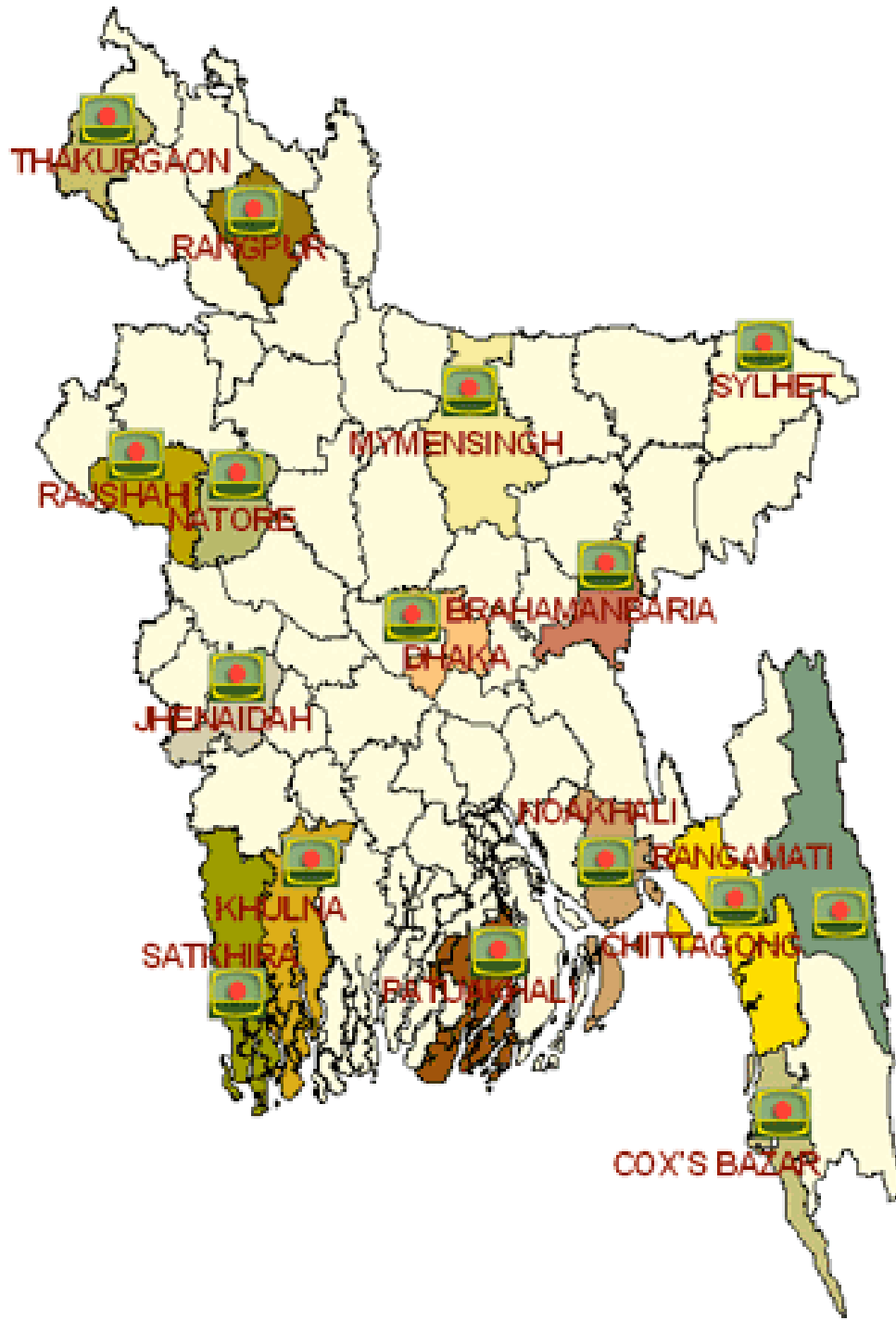
**Mymensingh**

**Rangamati**

**Noakhali**

**Shatkhira**  
**Jhenidah**  
**Thakurgaon**  
**Brahmanbaria**  
**Patuakhali**  
**Rajshahi**  
**Ukhia**





**BTV transmitters and relay stations**

*Source: BTV website*

Director General - Kazi Abu Zafar Muhammad Hasan Siddiqi

Tel: +880 2 9330131-9

+880 2 9330036-39

Email : [dg@btv.gov.bd](mailto:dg@btv.gov.bd)

[news@bttb.net.bd](mailto:news@bttb.net.bd)

Address: Bangladesh Television, Television Bhaban, Rampura, Dhaka-1219

**BTV Chittagong** [www.btv.gov.bd](http://www.btv.gov.bd)

BTV's Chittagong sub-station airs its own, locally produced programmes from 17.30 to 19.10 pm every day.

This segment of local programming includes a 10-minute regional news bulletin.

The Chittagong studios also produce short dramas and cultural programmes. Their quality is said to have improved since 2010.

General Manager BTV Chittagong

Tel: +880 31 611751

Email: [gm-chittagong@btv.gov.bd](mailto:gm-chittagong@btv.gov.bd)

**Address:** BTV, 27, Nasirabad Housing Society, Road No.3, Chittagong

**BTV World** [www.btv.gov.bd](http://www.btv.gov.bd)

BTV World is the international satellite channel of BTV.

It began broadcasting in 2004 and is on air 24 hours a day.

Most of the programmes are identical to those of BTV's domestic service broadcast by terrestrial transmitters.

BTV World is broadcast on AsiaSat 3S. Its footprint extends from the Sea of Japan in the east to Cyprus in the West, and from New Zealand-Australia in the South to Siberia in the North.

Director General - Kazi Abu Zafar Mohammad Hassan Siddiqui

Tel: +880 2 933 0131-6

+880 2 933 0036-8

Email: [dg@btv.gov.bd](mailto:dg@btv.gov.bd)

Address: BTV World, TV Bhaban, Rampura, Dhaka-1219 ,

**Sangsad TV** [www.btv.gov.bd](http://www.btv.gov.bd),

Sangsad TV airs parliamentary sessions and some discussions live from Parliament as well as programmes about parliamentary activity in other countries.

It began broadcasting in January 2011 and is on air for three hours per day whenever parliament is in session.

Sangsad TV uses the infrastructure, manpower and technical assistance of BTV, although the long-term plan is for it to become independent.

The Director General of BTV is also the Chief Executive of Sangsad TV.

Director General - Kazi Abu Zafar Mohammad Hassan Siddiqui

Tel: +880 2 933 0131-6

+880 2 933 0036-8

Email: [dg@btv.gov.bd](mailto:dg@btv.gov.bd)

**ATN Bangla** [www.atnbangla.tv](http://www.atnbangla.tv)



ATN Bangla is one of Bangladesh's two most popular private TV stations, alongside Channel i.

ATN Bangla transmits from studios in **Dhaka** via the Thaicom 3 satellite.

Its footprint covers Bangladesh, South Asia, the Middle-east, Europe, and North America.

ATN Bangla is also available on cable

There are news bulletins every hour between 08.00 and 23.00.

ATN Bangla's evening news programme is the most watched TV programme in the country, according to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey.

ATN Bangla and its sister channel ATN News are owned by the MultiMedia Production Company, whose main shareholder is Mahfuzur Rahman, a businessman who made his first fortune in the garment manufacturing industry.

ATN Bangla was the first private TV station to go on air in Bangladesh. It began broadcasting in 1997.

Chief News Editor - Z. I. Mamun,

Tel: +880 2 8111207-8

Email: [atn@dhaka.agni.com](mailto:atn@dhaka.agni.com)

Address: ATN Bangla, 98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, WASA Bhaban (1st floor), Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215

**ATN News** [www.atnbanqla.tv](http://www.atnbanqla.tv)



ATN News is a **Bangla** language, satellite and cable channel, providing news 24 hours a day.

It is owned by the Multi Media Production Company, which also owns ATN Bangla.

Politically the channel is more or less neutral.

ATN Bangla transmits from studios in Dhaka by satellite and cable.

It is broadcast via the Thaicom 3 satellite, whose footprint covers Bangladesh, South Asia, the Middle-east, Europe, and North America.

The channel offers news, news analysis, talk shows and studio discussions.

Head of News - Munni Shaha

Tel: +880 2 8189214-7

Email: [newshead@atnbanpla.tv](mailto:newshead@atnbanpla.tv)

Address: ATN News, Hassan Plaza, 53, Kawranbazar C/A, Dhaka - 1215

Channel i [www.channel-i-tv.com](http://www.channel-i-tv.com)



Channel-i is one of the two most popular private TV channels in Bangladesh, alongside ATN Bangla.

It is a family entertainment channel, offering a wide variety of programming including news, movies, dramas, talk shows, magazine programmes, and reality shows.

Shykh Seraj, the channel's Director and Head of News, is a well-known television personality.

he presented one of the most popular shows on BTV for over 20 years – a farmers' programme called *Hridoye Mati o Manush* ( Men and Soil ).

Seraj now presents a similar farmers' programme on Channel-i.

The TV station is owned by the Impress Group, one of the largest industrial conglomerates in Bangladesh, with interests in textiles, pharmaceuticals and media.

**Channel-i** began broadcasting by satellite and cable in 1999.

It broadcasts to Asia, the Middle East, Africa and parts of Europe on the Telstar 10 satellite.

Channel i is also distributed in the United States through the Dish Network.

Director and Head of News - Shykh Seraj,

Tel: +880 2 8891817

+880 2 8891160-65

Email: [info@channel-i-tv.com](mailto:info@channel-i-tv.com)

Address: Channel-i, 39-40 Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208

**International Television Ltd. (NTV)** [www.ntvbd.tv](http://www.ntvbd.tv)



International Television Channel Ltd. (NTV) is a private satellite channel, which claims a strong audience amongst Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East

The Chairman and Managing Director is Mohammad Mosaddek Ali Falu, a prominent industrialist and influential politician in the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

He also owns the **Bangla** language daily newspaper **Amar Desh**.

NTV broadcasts to Asia, the Middle East and Africa via the Apstar 2R satellite.

It first went on air in 2003.

Chief News Editor - Khairul Anwar

Tel: +880 2 9143381-5

Email: [info@ntvbd.com](mailto:info@ntvbd.com)

Address: NTV, BSEC Bhaban (6th Floor), 102 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215



**Ekushey Television (ETV)** [www.ekusheytv.com](http://www.ekusheytv.com)



Ekushey Television (ETV) was set up in 2000 by Simon Dring, a former BBC correspondent in Bangladesh, and a group of other former BBC staff

It was the only private TV station in Bangladesh to try broadcasting via terrestrial transmitters.

ETV quickly became very popular. Its innovative programmes and its professional style of presentation quickly won over viewers from BTV, its main competitor at the time.

Ekushey's news and current affairs programmes broke the BTV mould of simply reporting what various government ministers had done or said.

However, Ekushey's popularity and independent reporting soon made it political enemies.

The station's terrestrial broadcasts were shut down in 2002 by an incoming Bangladesh National Party (BNP) government, after a court ruled that Ekushey's license had been obtained illegally under the previous Awami League administration.

Ekushey was only granted permission to resume broadcasting in 2005. It was relaunched on satellite only in 2006.

ETV now broadcasts a mix of news and entertainment programmes like the other private channels.

Its editorial line is generally perceived as favouring the ruling Awami League.

The station broadcasts via the Telstar 10 satellite.

Editor - Shah Alamgir

Tel: +880 2 8126535-8

Email: [news.ekushey@gmail.com](mailto:news.ekushey@gmail.com)

Address: ETV, Jahangir Tower, 10 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215

**Desh TV** [www.desh.tv](http://www.desh.tv)



Desh TV is a private entertainment channel which started operations in 2007.

Its popular reality show *Ke Hote Chai Kotipati* is a Bangladeshi version of 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire'.

The two main shareholders of Desh TV are both members of parliament belonging to the ruling Awami League.

One, Asaduzzaman Noor, is also a famous actor. He presents some of the most popular programmes on TV.

Desh TV broadcasts via the Telstar 10 satellite.

Joint Editor - Sukanta Gupta Alak

Tel: +880 2 8332958

+880 2 8332922

Email : [web@desh.tv](mailto:web@desh.tv)

Address: Desh TV, Karnaphuli Media Point, 70, Shaheed Sangbadik Selina Parveen Sarak, Malibagh, Dhaka-1217

**Diganta TV** [www.digantatv.com](http://www.digantatv.com)



**Diganta Television** is a news and entertainment satellite TV channel with a strong Islamic influence.

It belongs to the Diganta Media Corporation, which also publishes the daily newspaper **Naya Diganta**.

The media group is owned by Mir Kashem Ali, an industrialist who is a leading member of the Islamic fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami opposition party.

Diganta TV broadcasts via the Apstar 2R satellite.

Tel: +880 2 9558303  
+880 2 9571709  
+880 2 9568661

Email: [info@digantatv.com](mailto:info@digantatv.com)

Address: Diganta Television, 166 Syed Nazrul Islam Sharani, Al-Razi Complex, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000

**Maasranga TV** [www.maasranga.tv](http://www.maasranga.tv)



Maasranga TV is a new private TV satellite channel which began broadcasting in July 2011.

It has aggressively recruited some of the best-known names in journalism and TV from its rivals.

The channel was set up by the Square Group, one of Bangladesh's largest industrial conglomerates. It has interests in pharmaceuticals, textiles, garment manufacturing and agro-chemicals.

Maasranga's Chief Executive, Syed Fahim Munaim, is a well-known journalist who was previously executive editor of **The Daily Star**. He was also press secretary to the Caretaker Government of 2007-8.

Maasranga TV has invested heavily in HD technology.

Chief Executive and Chief Editor - Syed Fahim Munaim

Tel: +880 2 8715877

Email: [fahim.ceo@maasranga.tv](mailto:fahim.ceo@maasranga.tv)

Address: 2 Bir Uttam Ziaur Rahman Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212

**Islamic TV** [www.islamictv.com.bd](http://www.islamictv.com.bd)



Islamic TV is the first purely Islamic television station in Bangladesh. Its stated mission is to spread the word of Islam

Islamic TV is owned by Said Iskandar, the younger brother of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, leader of the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

The satellite channel started broadcasting in 2007. Its approach is fairly professional.

Islamic TV broadcasts via the Telstar 10 satellite.

Chief News Editor - A.D.M. Saad Bin Rabi

Tel: +880 2 8610866

+880 2 8610769

Email: [newsdesk@islamictv.com.bd](mailto:newsdesk@islamictv.com.bd)

Address : Islamic TV, 34/1(3rd Floor), Paribag, Sonargaon Road, Hatirpul, Dhaka-1000

**Shomoy News TV** [www.somoynews.tv](http://www.somoynews.tv)

Shomoy News TV is a news channel.

However, but it is less popular than its main rival ATN News.

Shomoy is owned by Advocate Kamrul Islam, an influential member of the ruling Awami League.

The channel received its broadcast license in 2009, a year after the Awami League returned to power.

It broadcasts via the Apstar 2R satellite.

Tel: +880 29670058-65

Address: Somoy Media Lts, Nasir Trade Centre, 300/4 Bir Utam CR, Dutta Road, Dhaka-1205

## **List of television channels in Bangladesh**

	<b>Name of the channel</b>	<b>Launched</b>
1	BTV	1964
2	BTV World	2004
3	Sangsad TV	2011
4	ATN Bangla	1997
5	Channel-i	1999
6	Ekushey TV	2000 (re-launched 2006)
7	NTV	2003
8	RTV	2005
9	Bangla Vision	2006
10	Maasranga TV	2011
11	Desh TV	2009
12	Independent TV	2010
13	Shomoy TV	2010
14	ATN News	2010
15	Diganta TV	2007
16	Islamic TV	2007
17	Mohona TV	2010
18	My TV	2010
19	Boishakhi TV	2010
20	Ekattor TV	Not on air
21	Bijoy TV	Not on air
22	Channel 9	2012
23	Channel 24	Not on air
24	SA TV	Not on air
25	GTV	Not on air

*Source: infoasaid research 2012*

## **Print overview**

Newspapers are still widely read in Bangladesh, despite growing competition from private TV channels and radio stations.

The rapid spread of internet access from a low base has actually boosted newspaper readership.

A growing number of educated middle class people now read their favourite newspaper online. Bangladeshis in the diaspora are also heavy users of newspaper websites.

The growth of online readership has not so far dented sales of printed newspapers.

In fact, recent survey evidence shows that sales of the country's main daily newspapers are still growing.

In addition to the main national newspapers published in Dhaka, there are dozens of provincial dailies.

Until recently newspapers were the only source of independent news and information in Bangladesh.

Privately owned satellite TV channels only began producing their own news programmes in 2000 and Bangladesh's first private radio station did not hit the air waves until 2006.

According the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey, 27% of Bangladeshis read a newspaper at least once a week. However, most of these readers are men.

The survey indicated that 40% of Bangladeshi men read a newspaper regularly, but only 14% of women.



Literacy rates are higher among men, but other factors also contribute to this gender imbalance.

Men tend to control the family income. They also get out of the house more than women and thus have more opportunities to buy newspapers.

Surprisingly perhaps, the Nielsen survey showed a small increase in the number of newspaper readers from just 24% of the population in 2009.

This is partly because more and more middle class Bangladeshis are reading newspapers online as internet usage spreads.

**Prothom Alo**, whose name means 'First Light', is the top-selling newspaper in Bangladesh. Its website attracts more online readers than any other news website in the country.

Nevertheless, the newspaper reported a 10% increase in sales of printed copies between early 2011 and early 2012.

Although nearly half the population cannot read or write, many poor people listen to communal readings of newspapers in tea shops and other meeting places.

In rural areas it is common for teachers and other educated members of the local community to read newspapers aloud to large groups of semi-literate and illiterate people in tea shops.

The most popular and influential **Bangla** language newspaper is **Prothom Alo**.

According to the government's Department of Films and Publications, it had an audited daily circulation of 437,350 in early 2011.

The newspaper claimed on its Facebook page in April 2012 that daily sales had risen more than 10% from that level to 485,000 in early 2012.

Prothom Alo's sister paper, **The Daily Star**, is the most popular **English** language title in the country. It had an audited daily sale of 40,652 in early 2011.

Both newspapers belong to the Transcom Group, which also owns the news and current affairs station **ABC Radio**.

**Bangladesh Protodin**, which is owned by the Bashundhara industrial conglomerate, is the second most popular **Bangla** language daily. It had an audited circulation of 422,405 in early 2011.

Older newspapers, such as **Daily Ittefaq** and **Daily Sangbad**, which have been around since the 1950s, have lost readership to newer publications such as **Prothom Alo** and **Kaler Kantho**.

These newer titles have better design and layout, a more populist approach to news and they are written in less formal language

According to the Department of Films and Publications, there were 467 registered newspapers in Bangladesh in March 2012, of which 314 were dailies.

However, many of these were simply 'shell' newspapers with no meaningful circulation. They merely existed to pick up government advertising, access the government newsprint subsidy, and allow companies to comply with the legal requirement of publishing tender notices.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Dhaka</b>	<b>Provinces</b>	<b>Total no.</b>
Daily Newspaper	116	198	314
Weekly Newspaper	63	45	108
Fortnightly	11	04	15
Monthly Magazine	25	03	28
Quarterly	01	00	01
Six-monthly	00	01	01
Total	<b>216</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>467</b>

### **Registered newspapers in Bangladesh**

*Source: Department of Films and Publications March 2012*

Daily newspapers focus strongly on politics, administrative irregularities, local problems and corruption.

They also cover social issues, major local events, sports, business, world news and entertainment.

According to the 2011 Nielsen survey, national and local political news is the most widely read topic (87%), followed by sports (79%), international news (62%), and local news (51%).

All the major dailies also publish weekly pages or supplements on issues such as health, women, children, law & rights, fashion and entertainment.

Many have large networks of reporters and correspondents. Prothom Alo, for instance, has more than 240 reporters nationwide.

Local news agencies are commonly used as a source of news, particularly the online news service [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com).

Foreign news is mostly collected from international news agencies and the internet.

Newspapers have a long history in the region that is now Bangladesh. The first locally owned paper, the Bengal Gazette, was published in Dhaka in 1818.

Although 27% of the population reads newspapers, only 18% read magazines, according to the 2011 Nielsen survey. However, that still represents 30 million people.

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Circulation</b>
1	<i>Prothom Alo</i>	437,350
2	<i>Bangladesh Protidin</i>	422,405
3	<i>Kaler Kantho</i>	250,100
4	<i>Amader Somoy</i>	210,520
5	<i>Jugantor</i>	200,015
6	<i>Samakal</i>	141,250
7	<i>Ittefaq</i>	135,400
8	<i>Inqilab</i>	125,080
9	<i>Janakantha</i>	125,020
10	<i>Naya Diganta</i>	115,250

## Top 10 newspapers in Bangladesh by circulation

*Source: Department of Films and Publications 2011*

Some of the larger provincial dailies circulate nationally. These include:

**Gramer Kagoj** [www.gramerkagoj.com](http://www.gramerkagoj.com)

An independent Jessore based newspaper established in 1999.

**Dainik Purbokone** [www.dainikpurbokone.net](http://www.dainikpurbokone.net)

An independent Chittagong-based newspaper established in 1986.

**The Daily Azadi** [www.dainikazadi.org](http://www.dainikazadi.org)

Chittagong's oldest daily newspaper, established in 1960

Other prominent regional dailies include:

**Barishal News** (Barisal)

**Shahnama** (Barishal)

**Mathabhanga** (Chuadanga)

**Comilla Kagoj** (Comilla)

**Comilla Web** (Comilla)

**Golapganj** (Gopalganj)

**Noakhali Web** (Noakhali)

**The Daily Sunshine** (Rajshahi)

**Savar News 24** (Savar)

**Patradoot** (Shatkhira)

**Shibchor News** (Shibchor)

**Sylhet Sanglap** (Sylhet)

There are eight national English dailies in Bangladesh, including one influential business newspaper, **The Financial Express**.

However, their circulation figures are low. No English language daily, apart from **The Daily Star**, sells more than 20,000 copies per day.

Most of the national daily newspapers produce an online edition.

**Prothom Alo** boasts the most popular newspaper website. According to the newspaper's editor, it is accessed by upwards of 800,000 readers per day.

In March 2012, the internet analysis website [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com) rated Prothom Alo as the most popular news website in Bangladesh, ahead of the bilingual online newspaper [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com)

## Newspapers

**Prothom Alo** [www.prothom-alo.com](http://www.prothom-alo.com)



Prothom Alo, whose name means 'First Light,' is the top-selling **Bangla** language daily newspaper in Bangladesh.

It is politically independent and very influential.

Prothom Alo had an audited circulation of 437,350 copies per day in early 2011, according to the Ministry of Information Department of Films and Publications.

The newspaper claimed on its Facebook page in 2012 that daily sales had since risen by more than 10% to 485,000.

Several people read each copy of the newspaper sold.

The 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey estimated that Prothom Alo had an overall readership of 5.3 million.

According to the newspaper's editor, the internet edition of Prothom Alo had more than 800,000 online readers in 2011.

In March 2012, the web analytics company [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com) said [www.Prothom-Alo.com](http://www.Prothom-Alo.com) was the most popular news website in Bangladesh and the seventh most visited website in the country as a whole.

It said most of the newspaper's online readers were graduates aged between 25 and 34.

Prothom Alo was founded in 1998.

It is owned by the Transcom Group, an industrial conglomerate.

Transcom also owns Bangladesh's top selling **English** language newspaper, **The Daily Star**, and the talk radio station **ABC Radio**.

Prothom Alo is popular for its quality reporting, and general credibility.

The newspaper generates interest in its output by hosting public, regional discussions to discuss major issues of the day.

It has run strong campaigns against drug abuse, sexual harassment and violence against women through its readers' forum. The newspaper also supports social development programmes for marginalised groups..

In addition to campaigning on social issues, Prothom Alo helped to popularise mathematics in Bangladesh by organising a Maths Olympiad in 2003.

Contact: Matiur Rahman, Editor

Tel : +880 2 8110081

+880 2 8115307-10

Email: [editor@prothom-alo.info](mailto:editor@prothom-alo.info)

[editor.prothomalo@gmail.com](mailto:editor.prothomalo@gmail.com)

Address: Prothom Alo, CA Bhaban, 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215



**Bangladesh Protodin** [www.bangladeshprotidin.com](http://www.bangladeshprotidin.com)<http://www.protidin.com/>

আমরা জনগণের পক্ষে

**বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন**

Bangladesh Protodin, whose name means 'Bangladesh Every Day,' is a popular tabloid which has become the second most popular daily newspaper in the country.

It had an audited circulation of 422,405 in early 2011, according to the Ministry of Information's Department of Films and Publications.

This 12-page tabloid covers news, features, sports, entertainment, education, business, IT, health and other matters in a series of brief summary articles.

It generally favours the ruling Awami League.

Bangladesh Protodin is published by the Bashundhara Group, one of the largest industrial conglomerates in the country. I

Bashundhara publishes Bangladesh's third most popular **Bangla** language daily, **Kaler Kantho** and an English language newspaper, the **Daily Sun**.

Editor - Nayeem Nizam

Tel : +880 2 8402364

+880 2 71728356

Email: [bdprotidin@gononet.com](mailto:bdprotidin@gononet.com)

Address: Bangladesh Protodin, 371/A, Block-D, Bashundhara Residential Area, Baridhara

Kaler Kantho [www.kalerkantho.com](http://www.kalerkantho.com)

## কালের কণ্ঠ

Kaler Kantho has become Bangladesh's third most popular national newspaper since it was launched in January 2010.

It aspires to be a quality newspaper, with longer and more detailed articles than its Bshundhara Group stable mate **Bangladesh Protodin**.

It has extensive sections on specialist issues such as sport, business, culture and legal matters.

However, sales still lag well behind those of its more Bangladesh Protodin, which occupies the number two spot and has a lower cover price.

Kaler Kantho had a daily sale of 250,100 copies in early 2011, according to figures compiled by the Ministry of Information's Department of Film and Publications.

Bashundhara Group also owns the **English** language **Daily Sun**

Acting Editor - Emdadul Haq Milon,

Tel: +880 2 8402372

+880 2 8402373

+880 2 8402374

Email: [info@kalerkantho.com](mailto:info@kalerkantho.com)

Address: Kaler Kantho, Bashundhara R/A, Plot: 371/A, Block-D, Baridhara, Dhaka – 1229.

**Amader Shomoy** [www.amadershomoy.net](http://www.amadershomoy.net)



Amader Shomoy started publishing in 2003 and has rapidly built up a strong circulation.

It is one of the five most popular dailies in the country with a circulation of 210,520 in early 2011, according to official figures.

The paper was founded by its first editor and publisher Nayeemul Islam Khan.

However, he lost control of Amader Shomoy in September 2011 after losing a court case concerning the alleged misappropriation of funds. This was filed against him by the powerful businessman Noor Ali.

Amader Shomoy subsequently passed into the hands of Noor Ali, Chairman of the Unique Group of businesses, which span industry, tourism and banking.

Noor Ali has stated that he does not want to use the paper 'as a tool for trading'.

What political stance will be taken by the paper under the new owner was unclear in late 2011.

Noor Ali supported Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League before the 2008 election after having earlier brought a court case he brought against her.

He also had some run-ins with the previous Bangladesh National Party (BNP) government.

Editor - Ali Sohag

Tel: +880 2 9669107

+880 2 8618338

+880 2 9674338

Email: [info@amadershomoy.com](mailto:info@amadershomoy.com)

Address: Amader Shomoy, 65 Mymensingh Lane, Bangla Motor, [Dhaka](#)

Daily Jugantor [www.jugantor.com](http://www.jugantor.com)



Jugantor is one of the five top-selling national newspapers in Bangladesh.

According to the Ministry of Information's Department of Films and Publications, it had daily sales of 200,015 in early 2011.

it is owned by the Jamuna Group of companies which has businesses in real estate, banking and other sectors.

Salma Islam, the Editor, is the wife of Nurul Islam Babul, Chairman of Jamuna Group. She is also a Member of Parliament for the Jatiya Party, a junior coalition partner of the ruling Awami League party.

The newspaper's editorial line tends to favour the current government.

Editor - Salma Islam MP

Tel: +880 2 7194701-5

+880 2 7194004-5,

Email: [jugantor@gononet.com](mailto:jugantor@gononet.com)

Address: Jugantor, 12/7, North Kamalapur, Dhaka-1217

**Shamokal** [www.shamokal.com](http://www.shamokal.com)



Shamokal is a national newspaper that began publishing in 2005.

It had a circulation of 141,250 in early 2011.

The newspaper claims political neutrality, but in practice it seems to lean in favour of the ruling Awami League.

Editor - Golam Sarwar

Tel: +880 2 9889821

+880 2 9888705

+880 2 9861408

Email: [info@shamokalbd.com](mailto:info@shamokalbd.com)

[samakal@gmail.com](mailto:samakal@gmail.com)

Address: Samakal, 136 Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208

The Daily Star [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

# The Daily Star

The Daily Star is the most widely read **English** language newspaper in Bangladesh.

It had daily sales of 40,652 copies in early 2011.

The newspaper sells twice as many copies as its nearest English language rival, **The Independent**.

The Daily Star is read by many government decision-makers, business people, diplomats and foreign aid workers.

Its potential influence is therefore out of proportion to the circulation figures.

The Daily Star, like its **Bangla** language sister paper **Prothom Alo**, is generally regarded as being politically independent.

Both newspapers are published by the Transcom Group, an industrial conglomerate which also owns **ABC Radio**.

Editor - Mahfuz Anam

Tel: +880 2 9144330

+880 2 8124944

Email : [reporting@thedailystar.net](mailto:reporting@thedailystar.net)

[editor@thedailystar.net](mailto:editor@thedailystar.net)

Address: The Daily Star, 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215

## **News Agencies**

There are two main conventional news agencies in Bangladesh - **Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS)** and **United News of Bangladesh (UNB)**.

However, the news website [www.BDnews24.com](http://www.BDnews24.com) is also used as a source of news by many media outlets in the country.

### **Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS)**

BSS ([www.bssnews.net](http://www.bssnews.net)) is the national news agency. It is run by the Ministry of Information.

BSS publishes news in both **English** and **Bangla**. It distributes international news and features from **Agence France Presse** and **IPS**.

It is a major source of copy for both newspapers and the electronic media.

The main newsroom is in **Dhaka**. It has bureaux in **Chittagong, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Bogra, Khulna, Barisal, Rangamati** and **Sylhet**.

BSS began life as part of the Associated Press of Pakistan. It became an independent entity and assumed its present name in 1972, shortly after Bangladesh's independence.

Managing Director and Chief Editor - Ihsanul Karim

Tel : +880 2 9555036

Email : [bssnews@bssnews.net](mailto:bssnews@bssnews.net)

[bssnews@bssnews.org](mailto:bssnews@bssnews.org)

[bssnews2@yahoo.com](mailto:bssnews2@yahoo.com)

Address: Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), 68/2, Purana Paltan, Dhaka – 1000



**United News of Bangladesh (UNB)** [www.unbnews.org](http://www.unbnews.org)



UNB is a private agency which started operating in January 1988 in association with the US-based international news agency Associated Press (AP).

Its large network of correspondents produce a wide variety of news, information and data.

In addition to a bi-lingual news service in **English** and **Bangla**, UNB runs a feature service. This is devoted to special reports, analyses and in-depth studies of specific events and issues.

In early 2012 UNB has about 100 paying subscribers across all branches of the Bangladeshi media.

It distributes foreign news from AP and international news photos and graphics from **Agence France Presse (AFP)** and **Reuters**.

Editor - Enayetullah Khan

Tel: +880 2 9345541

+880 2 9345543

Email : [unb\\_news@yahoo.com](mailto:unb_news@yahoo.com)

Address: UNB, Cosmos Centre 69/1, New Circular Road, Malibagh, Dhaka - 1217

**Bdnews24.com** [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com)

**bdnews24.com**  
— Bangladesh's First Online Newspaper —

This extremely popular news website started out in early 2005 as the country's first web-based news agency.

It has a good reputation as a fast and reliable source of news and is used extensively by all the Bangladeshi media as a primary news source.

Bdnews24 has recruited some of the best journalists in Bangladesh. It has strong newsroom values. No story is run without confirmation from a second source.

Users often lift stories from the Bdnews24 website – which is up-dated hourly – and then run them as if they were their own, often with no changes.

Bdnews24 is also a popular source of information for individual web surfers.

According to the internet use analysis website [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com), it is the eighth most popular website in Bangladesh, immediately behind the website of Prothom Alo, the country's top-selling newspaper.

Editor in Chief - Toufique Inrose Khalidi

Tel: +880 2 8817108

+880 2 8817131

+880 2 8817135

Email : [news.editor@bdnews24.com](mailto:news.editor@bdnews24.com)

[newsroom@bdnews24.com](mailto:newsroom@bdnews24.com)

Address: Bdnews24, 99, Mohakhali C/A, (4th Floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212

**NewsNetwork (NN)** [www.newsnetwork-bd.org](http://www.newsnetwork-bd.org)

This is an independent not-for-profit organization that provides a features service to local newspapers.

NN says it is committed to exposing what is wrong with society and to encouraging those who are trying to bring about change.

The organization was founded in 1994 and has become a popular place for young women to start their careers as journalists and writers.

NN has received financial assistance from the Ford Foundation, SDC, CIDA, USAID, Netherlands Embassy, The World Bank, DIAKONIA, NORAD, DANIDA and The American Center.

Founder/Editor -Shahiduzzaman,

Tel: +88 02 9660941

+88 02 9662012

Email: [newswork@citechco.net](mailto:newswork@citechco.net)

Address: News Network, House 9, Road 5, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1205

## Online media

Internet use in Bangladesh is growing fast from a low base, but so far access to the web is mainly restricted to the educated affluent urban elite.

According to the website [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com) there were 5.5 million internet users in Bangladesh at the end of 2011 – equivalent to 3.5% of the country's population.

The website [www.socialbakers.com](http://www.socialbakers.com) which measures global internet usage, said more than 2.5 million Bangladeshis had signed up to the social networking site Facebook by February 2012.

According to the internet traffic analysis website [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com) the most popular Bangladeshi news website is [www.prothom-alo.com](http://www.prothom-alo.com) the online edition of the country's top-selling newspaper **Prothom Alo**.

In 2011, the newspaper claims that its online edition attracted more than 800,000 regular readers.

Prothom Alo is followed closely in 8<sup>th</sup> position by the online news website [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com).

News about Bangladesh is often faster to break online than on local TV or radio.

Most large news organisations have their own website. Some, like [www.Bdnews24.com](http://www.Bdnews24.com) are updated every hour.

The Internet arrived in Bangladesh in 1996 and was initially slow to pick up users.

But that has changed as the government rolls out its 'Digital Bangladesh by 2021' programme.

Young educated city dwellers are the most frequent users of the Internet, particularly university students and graduates.

Internet cafes remain popular, but wherever 3G mobile network coverage exists, educated middle class people surf the internet on their mobile phone instead.

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and YouTube are popular with the minority of young people who have internet access.

Many professionals who dabble in stocks and shares use the mobile internet to keep a watch on prices at the Dhaka Stock Exchange.

A growing number of internet users have a computer and internet connection at home.

In 2007 the government constructed two experimental community-based **e-centres** at the union parishad (UP) local government level in order to test the introduction of IT services into rural areas.

Three years later, similar Union Information and Service Centres (UISC) had been built in each of the 4,498 Union Parishads in the country.

By 2011, the majority of these rural IT centres were operational. However, many of them were plagued by an unreliable electricity supply and low bandwidth and bureaucratic inertia.

In principle the UISCs provide both online and offline information services.

They distribute government forms and give information about agriculture, health, education, law, human rights, employment and marketing.

They also provide a fast and direct communications link between government ministries in Dhaka and local administrations.

Broadband is available in the main cities, but internet access charges are high in comparison to other south Asian countries.

In 2011, broadband tariffs varied from around US\$11 per month for a 512Kbps connection, to US\$72 for a faster 2Mbps lines.

Wi-Max wireless internet connections are available from some ISPs. These provide both fixed and mobile internet access.

The government has occasionally tried to block access to websites on political or moral grounds.

In May 2010, it blocked access to the social networking site Facebook for nine days, ostensibly on the grounds that it was carrying unacceptable cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

However, many people suspected at the time that a contributing factor to the move was the government's wish to suppress cartoons and jokes about the Prime Minister that were also circulating on the popular social networking site.

There have also been reports of government monitoring journalists' emails.

In April 2012, [www.alexacom.com](http://www.alexacom.com) listed the 10 most visited websites in Bangladesh as follows:

1. Google.com
2. Facebook
3. YouTube
4. Yahoo
5. Google.com.bd
6. Blogspot.com
7. Prothom Alo
8. Bdnews24
9. Wikipedia
10. Banglanews24

Blogging in both **Bangla** and **English** is popular among Bangladeshis both at home and abroad.

Many of them are grouped on the aggregator site <http://bdbloggerz.blogspot.com> which categorises them by language.

**Twitter** has taken off in quite a big way thanks to the diaspora.

In April 2012, the Twitter traffic analysis site [www.wefollow.com](http://www.wefollow.com) listed BRITTO, a Bangladeshi social worker, as the most popular Tweeter in the country, with nearly 40,000 followers.

His nearest rival was AhmedNitul, a Bangladeshi IT entrepreneur, with fewer than 9,000.

## **Traditional Channels of Communication**

Traditional channels of communication exist in the form of music, drama, dance and puppetry, and these continue to play an important role in Bangladesh society.

Drama and puppet shows are still seen in rural market places and bazaars, and are sometimes used for educational and development communication.

Traditional healers and midwives still carry a lot of weight in remote villages, as do paramedics, teachers and doctors.

Friday prayers, at which large numbers of people (mostly men) gather, are sometimes used to communicate social as well as religious messages.

In urban areas, graffiti is still widely used by political parties, unions and student groups to promote an idea, attack enemies, make demands and inform the population of upcoming events such as strikes.

Traditional sources of information have largely given way to the electronic media, particularly radio and mobile phones.

However, traditional channels of communication are still important in Bangladesh's thousands of villages.



## Media Resources

### Media regulators

#### **Bangladesh Press Council (BPC)** [www.presscouncil.gov.bd](http://www.presscouncil.gov.bd)

The Bangladesh Press Council (BPC) is a government-run body set up to monitor the practice of journalism and ethical standards as per the code of conduct defined by the Press Council Act of 1979.

The BPC has the authority to inquire into any violation of the Act by a media organization and to warn, censure or take other disciplinary measures.

It can also resolve conflicts between media houses if necessary.

Apart from this, the BPC is also charged with upholding the freedom of the press.

In May 2010, the national newspaper **Kaler Kantho** published allegations that the editor of its rival **Prothom Alo** had been involved with the militant perpetrator of a grenade attack.

The Prothom Alo editor lodged a complaint with the BPC which found in his favour.

It warned Kaler Kantho not to repeat the libel in the future, and required the newspaper to print the Press Council's full verdict.

Even so, the BPC is a largely toothless watchdog, with few real powers.

Chairman - Mr Justice B.K. Das

Tel: +880 2 7172049

+880 2 7172049

**Address:** Bangladesh Press Council, Ministry Of Information, 40, Topkhana Road,  
Dhaka

**Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC)** [www.btrc.gov.bd](http://www.btrc.gov.bd)

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) licences and regulates telecommunications companies and private TV stations.

It was established by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act of 2001.

Director - Avijit Chowdhury

Tel: +880 2 9554479

+880 2 7162277

Email: [avijit@btrc.gov.bd](mailto:avijit@btrc.gov.bd)

[btrc@btrc.gov.bd](mailto:btrc@btrc.gov.bd)

Address: Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, IEB Bhaban (5<sup>th</sup>,  
6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> floors), Ramna, Dhaka-1000

**Press Information Department (PID) [www.bdpressinform.org](http://www.bdpressinform.org)**

Press Information Department is the government's information office.

It forms part of the Ministry of Information.

Tel: +880 2 7165942

+880 2 7165553

+880 2 7161053

Email: [pid\\_1@bangla.net](mailto:pid_1@bangla.net)

Address: Ministry of Information, Clinic Bhaban, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka 1000

**Department of Film and Publications [www.dfp.gov.bd/en](http://www.dfp.gov.bd/en)**

The Department of Films and Publications (DFP) forms part of the Ministry of Information.

It audits circulation of newspapers, registers periodicals and provides services relating to government advertisements.

The department also makes documentary films and publishes stories about the country's heritage and socio-economic development.

Deputy Director- Anwara Begum

Tel: +880 2 9332129;

Email: [rtidfp@yahoo.com](mailto:rtidfp@yahoo.com)

Address: Department of Films and Publications, Ministry of Information, 112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka-1000

## Media Associations

### **National Press Club** (no website)

The National Press Club is the biggest professional forum for journalists in Bangladesh.

Established in 1949, the club offers a conference room, a cafeteria and internet browsing facilities for journalists in Dhaka.

The Executive Committee of the club is elected by the members.

There are independent press clubs in many provincial towns and cities which do not have any formal links to the National Press Club.

Conflicts between rival political and other interest groups within the media community are common.

As a result many towns have more than one press club, each association representing a rival faction.

President -Kamal Uddin Sabuj, President (News Editor of the Bangladesh Sangbad Sanstha news agency)

General Secretary - Syed Abdal Ahmed

Tel: +880 2 9563383

+880 2 9563395

Email: [pressclub@ban gla.net](mailto:pressclub@ban gla.net)

Address: National Press Club, 18 Topkhana Road, Dhaka-1000.

**Dhaka Reporters Unity** [www.dru.com.bd](http://www.dru.com.bd)

Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) is a professional association that represents nearly 1,000 working journalists in the capital.

Its members work across the range of print and electronic media.

The DRU is an independent organisation dedicated to increasing the professional expertise and skills of journalists. It was founded in 1995.

The DRU actively monitors infringements of press freedom in news reporting.

President - Mostak Hossain

General Secretary - Jamal Uddin

Tel: +880 2 98656566

Email: [dru@reportersunity.org](mailto:dru@reportersunity.org)

Address: Dhaka Reporters Unity, House # 65, Road # 6, Motijheel

**Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists** (no website)

The Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists is the umbrella body for all journalists' unions in the country.

However, it is politically divided into two separate and competing factions.

One supports the ruling Awami League.

The other sympathises with the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

**Pro-Awami League faction:**

President - Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury

Secretary General - Abdul Jalil Bhiayan

Tel: +880 2 9560177

+880 2 9554853

+880 2 9560177

Email: ????????

Address: Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka-1000

**Pro-BNP faction:**

President - Ruhul Amin Gazi

Secretary General - Showkat Mahmud

Tel: +880 2 9560177

+880 2 9554853

+880 2 9560177

Email: ????????

Address: Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka-1000

**Dhaka Union of Journalists (No website)**

The Dhaka Union of Journalists is a trade union that aims to improve its members pay and working conditions.

It was a politically neutral organisation until 1990, when it split into two factions.

One supports the ruling Awami League.

The other is linked to the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP)

**Pro-Awami League faction:**

President - Sha Alamgir (Head of News at Maasranga TV)

Tel: +880 2 9560177

+880 2 9343079

General Secretary - Anu Zafar Shurjo

Tel: +880 9560177

Address: Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka-1000

**Pro BNP faction:**

Contact: Abdus Shahid, President (News Editor at NTV)

Tel: +880 2 9560177

+880 2 9343079

Address: Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka-1000

**Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) (no website)**

The Diplomatic Correspondents Association Bangladesh (DCAB) groups journalists who cover diplomacy and foreign affairs.

There are seven executive board members and 30 members

The association was founded in 1998.

President - Raheed Ejaz, (Diplomatic Correspondent, Prothom Alo)

Mob: +880 1552 316533

+880 1723 808825

Email: [raheed@gmail.com](mailto:raheed@gmail.com)

**Address:** Prothom Alo, CA Bhaban, 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka

### **Health Reporters Forum**

This brings together health journalists working in the print and electronic media.

President - Moniruzzaman Uzzal (Jugantor)

Mob: +880 1911 357029

Email: [uzzaldhk@yahoo.com](mailto:uzzaldhk@yahoo.com)

Address: Daily Jugantor. 12/7 North Kamalapur, Motijil, Dhaka 1217

### **Dhaka Sub-Editors' Council**

Dhaka sub-editors council was founded in 2000 to help improve journalism standards.

It has about 400 members who edit news reports in a variety of news organisations.

President: Mukul Talukder (Amar Desh)

Mob: +880 1552 396975

Tel: +880 1740 962193

Email: [info@dsecbd.org](mailto:info@dsecbd.org)



## **Economic Reporters Forum (ERF)**

The Economic Reporters Forum groups journalists who cover economic and business issues.

General Secretary - Kawser Rahman (Samakal)

Tel: +880 2 9553550

+880 2 9894294

Email: [kawser\\_rahman@yahoo.com](mailto:kawser_rahman@yahoo.com)

Address: ERF, C/O National Press Club, Topkhana Road, Dhaka-1000

## **Parliament Journalists Association (PJA)**

The PJA has about 25 members who cover parliament for national media outlets.

President - Shahjahan Sarder

Tel: +88 02 9131101

General Secretary - Asis Saikat (Executive Editor, Daily Ittefaq)

Tel: +880 2 9131101

+880 2 9257415

Mob: +880 1711 542758

Email: [saikatasis@yahoo.com](mailto:saikatasis@yahoo.com)

**Centre for Women Journalists, Bangladesh** [www.womenjournalistbd.org](http://www.womenjournalistbd.org)

Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra (Centre for Women Journalists) represents working women journalists.

It estimates that there are about 6,000 active journalists in Bangladesh, of whom just 300 are women.

The Centre for Women Journalists was established in 2001.

It organizes training workshops and seminars, mentors students and aspiring women journalists and encourages more women to join the profession.

President: Nasima Haque Minu, President

Tel: +88 02 9347790-9

+88 02 9563383

+88 0022 9674566

General Secretary - Dil Monowara Monu

Tel: +880 2 9118636

+880 2 8611973

Email: [cfwjb@yahoo.com](mailto:cfwjb@yahoo.com)

[narisangbadik@yahoo.com](mailto:narisangbadik@yahoo.com)

[info@womenjournalistbd.org](mailto:info@womenjournalistbd.org)

Address: C/O-National Press Club, 18 Topkhana Road, Dhaka-1000

**Telecom Reporters Forum**

The Telecom Reporters Forum has about 30 members who cover this specialist beat.

General Secretary – Shawkat Milton (ATN Bangla)

Tel: +880 1911316946

Email: [shawkat.milton@gmail.com](mailto:shawkat.milton@gmail.com)

**Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum** [www.bijf.org](http://www.bijf.org)

The Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum (BIJF) was established in 2002 as a forum for journalists covering Information and Communications Technology.

President - Mohammad Kawsar Uddin (ICT Reporter, The Daily Sangbad),

Mob: +8801712 198039

Email: [kawsaru@yahoo.com](mailto:kawsaru@yahoo.com)

General Secretary - Naznin Kabir

Mob: +880 1819 275700

Email: [iamdheow@yahoo.co](mailto:iamdheow@yahoo.co)

## **Media development organisations**

**BBC Media Action** [www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where we work/asia/bangladesh](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/asia/bangladesh)

BBC Media Action is the international media development arm of the BBC. Until December 2011 it was known as the BBC World Service Trust.

Its work in Bangladesh focuses on education, livelihoods, governance and human rights.

Traditionally BBC Media Action has worked mainly with local radio and TV broadcasters in Bangladesh, but in recent years it has increasingly sought to use mobile phones as a new channel of mass communication.

In 2009, it launched **BBC Janala** (window), an ambitious programme aimed at helping millions of Bangladeshi adults to learn English by using their mobile phone as a channel for delivering a series of daily three-minute audio lessons.

Anyone can learn and practice English by calling the shortcode 3000 on any mobile network and listening in for less than one US cent per minute.

BBC Media Action has launched two television programmes - a drama series and game show - to help children and adults of all ages to learn English.

BBC Janala also publishes written English lessons three times a week in **Prothom Alo**, Bangladesh's top-selling national newspaper.

In October 2010, two television programmes - a drama series called *Bishaash* and an accompanying game show *BBC Janala - Mojay Mojay Shekha* went on air to complement the lessons delivered by mobile phone.

*Bishaash* consists mainly of Bangla speech in order to attract as large an audience as possible, but an introduction to everyday English is woven into the storylines.

*BBC Janala - Mojay Mojay Shekha* builds on the English vocabulary used in the drama. The popularity of the programmes has led to the rebroadcast of both series.

A BBC Janala English Learning Book was launched in December 2011.

BBC Janala was planning to launch a new series of English learning courses in early 2012. These will draw together outputs from the different media platforms around a single core syllabus.

BBC Janala also planned to develop a network of English language clubs around Bangladesh, linked to the new courses. Learners would be encouraged to set up English clubs with family, friends or colleagues in order to have more opportunities to practice spoken English.

Earlier, from 2005 to 2010, BBC Media Action helped to produce the popular weekly radio and TV discussion programme *Sanglap* (dialogue).

This allowed studio audiences to question a panel of government and business leaders about topical national issues related to governance. The programme was designed to promote better accountability.

*Sanglap* was broadcast by **BBC Bangla**, the BBC's Bangla language radio service, and by **Channel i**, one of Bangladesh's most popular private TV channels.

The programme was so popular that it inspired several imitations by other local TV stations.

Contact - Maz Islam

Tel: +880 2 9890040

Email: [maz.islam@bbcwstbd.org](mailto:maz.islam@bbcwstbd.org)

Address: BBC Media Action, IK Tower [7th Floor] CEN (A) 2, Gulshan North Avenue, Gulshan 2, Dhaka- 1212

### **Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)**

[www.bnnrc.net](http://www.bnnrc.net)

The BNNRC is a national networking body that promotes the development of community radio in Bangladesh.

It also advocates for the free flow of information, equitable and affordable access to information, and access to the internet and communications technology for remote and marginalized communities.

The BNNRC played a key role in the campaign to establish the first community radio stations in Bangladesh.

It now operates a Community Radio Help Desk to help fledgling stations.

Chief Executive - AHM Bazlur Rahman

Tel: +880 2 9130750

Mob: +880 1711 881647

Email: [ceo@bnnrc.net](mailto:ceo@bnnrc.net)

Address: BNNRC, House No: 13/1, Road: 02, Shaymoli, Dhaka-1207

### **Bangladesh Centre for Development Journalism and Communication (BCDJC)**

[www.bcdjc.com](http://www.bcdjc.com)

The BCDJC is an NGO that undertakes journalism training and encourages women to play a more prominent role in the media.

It also provides consultancy services to the government and non-government organisations, on policy and programme formulation relating to the media and public relations sectors.

President - Nayeemul Islam Khan, President

Tel: +880 2 8620539

Email: [info@bcdjc.com](mailto:info@bcdjc.com)

[bcdjc\\_president@yahoo.com](mailto:bcdjc_president@yahoo.com)

Address: BCDJC, 64 Central Road (Ground Floor), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1205

### **Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) (no website)**

The Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) was formed by the government in 1976 to provide training for working journalists, undertake research on mass communications and to provide advisory and consultancy services.

It organizes training courses and facilitates journalistic research.

Director General - Dulal Chandra Biswas

Mob: +880 1711 594 670

Tel: +880 2 9330081-84  
+880 2 9341906

Email: [dg@pib.gov.bd](mailto:dg@pib.gov.bd)  
[dgpib@yahoo.com](mailto:dgpib@yahoo.com)

Address: Press Institute of Bangladesh, 3 Circuit House Road, Dhaka-1000

**Centre for Media and Communications (CMCS)** [www.cmcsbd.org](http://www.cmcsbd.org)

CMCS is an independent, non-political and non-profit organization which undertakes journalism training, research and media consultancy.

It is based in Dhaka.

Chairman - Sohel Manzur

Tel: +880 2 9144389

Email: [contact@cmcsbd.org](mailto:contact@cmcsbd.org)

Address: CMCS, 12/6 Iqbal Road, 1st floor Block A, Mohammadpur Dhaka-1207

**Centre for Communication and Development Bangladesh** [www.ccbd.org](http://www.ccbd.org)

CCD Bangladesh is an NGO based in the northern city of **Rajshahi** that promotes the use of information and the media for sustainable development.

It was established in 1999 and organises training courses and workshops. It actively supports community radio initiatives.

Director - G M Mourtoza

Mob: +880 1715 137780

Tel: +880 721 751001

Email: [ccd@ccdbd.org](mailto:ccd@ccdbd.org)

[ccd.bangladesh@gmail.com](mailto:ccd.bangladesh@gmail.com)

Address: CCD Bangladesh, Holding No. 418/A, Ward No. 25, Monafer Morh, Rajshahi

**Drik** [www.drik.net](http://www.drik.net)

Drik promotes the innovative use of the media to combat social inequality, in particular through photo-journalism and the visual media.

It is keen to develop investigative reporting.

Drik pioneered the use of email in Bangladesh and launched the nation's first webzine **Meghbarta** and the human rights portal **Banglarights** [www.banglarights.net](http://www.banglarights.net) .

It started out in 1991 as the first Bangladeshi picture agency.

Drik is the Sanskrit word for vision.



Managing Director - Shahidul Alam

Director - Rahnuma Ahmed

Tel: +880 2 9120125

+880 2 8123412

+880 2 8112954

Email: [shahidul@drik.net](mailto:shahidul@drik.net), [rahnuma@drik.net](mailto:rahnuma@drik.net)

Address: Drik, House 58, Road 15A (New), Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka 1209

**Journalism Training and Research Initiative (JATRI)** [www.jatribd.org](http://www.jatribd.org)

The Journalism Training and Research Initiative (JATRI), was launched by the Institute of Governance Studies (IGS) of BRAC University in Dhaka, with funding from USAID in 2007.

It provides training and other support to promote investigative journalism in Bangladesh.

JATRI also undertakes research and organises meetings.

The initial five-year USAID funding package for JATRI was due to end in 2012. It was unclear how the organisation would be financed afterwards.

Chief Executive - Jamil Ahmed

Mob: +880 1711855732

Tel: +880 2 8189015

+880 2 8189016

Email: [jamil@jatribd.org](mailto:jamil@jatribd.org)

Address: JATRI, T.K. Bhaban, Level 12, 13 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka 1215

**Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI)** [www.mrdibd.org](http://www.mrdibd.org)

MRDI is an NGO that aims to improve the standard of journalism in Bangladesh, through training for individual journalists and media organisations, media monitoring and research.

It is particularly active in promoting corporate social responsibility and the right to information.

Executive Director - Hasibur Rahman

Tel: +880 2 9134717

+880 2 9137147

Email: [info@mrdibd.org](mailto:info@mrdibd.org)

[bmrdi@yahoo.com](mailto:bmrdi@yahoo.com)

Address: MRDI, 2/9 Sir Syed Road (3rd Floor), Block A, Mohammadpur, Dhaka 1207

**Mass-line Media Centre (MMC)** [www.mass-line.org](http://www.mass-line.org)

The MMC is an NGO that promotes human rights and democratic values through professional development of the media. Its projects and activities include:

- Media training
- A news agency for children Shishu Prokash [www.shishuprokash.com](http://www.shishuprokash.com)
- The launch of one of Bangladesh's first community radio stations – **Lokobetar 99.2 FM** in **Barguna**
- Information Centre to Enhance Women and Child Rights Issues
- Video documentary on disaster management aimed at reducing loss of life and damage to property in natural disasters.

The MMC was founded in 1995.

Executive Director - Kamrul Hassan Monjur

Tel: +880 2 9125077

+880 2 8123446

Email: [mass-line@bangla.net](mailto:mass-line@bangla.net)

[info@mass-line.org](mailto:info@mass-line.org)

Address: MMC, 1/20; Humayan Road: Block- B, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

**VOICE – Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment** [www.voicebd.org](http://www.voicebd.org)

VOICE is a rights-based, activist organization that works at the local and national levels to resist domination of the Bangladeshi economy by international financial institutions and multi-national business corporations.

It promotes food sovereignty, media and communication rights, governance and human rights.

VOICE undertakes training, policy research and advocacy and helps to establish links between grass roots representatives and policy makers. It was founded in 2001.

Executive Director - Ahmed Swapan Mahmud

Tel: +880 2 8158688

Email: [exchange.voice@gmail.com](mailto:exchange.voice@gmail.com)

[voicebd@rediffmail.com](mailto:voicebd@rediffmail.com)

Address: House #6, 4th floor, Block-Ka, Pisciculture Housing Society, Shyamoli, Dhaka-1207

**Society for Media and Suitable Human Communication Techniques (SoMaSHTe)**

<http://somashte.org/>

SoMaSHTe works to harness the media and communications for social and economic development.

It aims to increase the participation of ordinary people in the print and electronic media in order to enhance their access to knowledge and information.

It was founded in 2005.

Director - Mir Masrur Zaman

Mob: +880 1749469746

E-mail: [somashte@gmail.com](mailto:somashte@gmail.com)

Address: SoMaSHTe, 4/1, (1st Floor) Humayun Road, Block-B, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

**Bangladesh Amateur Radio League (BARL)**    Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.

The Bangladesh Amateur Radio League (BARL) has about 40 members.

Amateur radio operations were legalised in 1991, but 20 years later only 36 amateur (ham) radio licenses had been issued by the government.

Following a devastating cyclone in 1997, BARL – in association with the Red Crescent and CARE - sent teams equipped with two-way radios to the affected coastal belt to provide emergency communications.

President - Anwar Anwar

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## **Telecommunications Overview**

There has been massive growth in mobile telecoms over the past 10 years.

Mobile phones are mostly used for voice calls, but increasingly people are also using them to listen to the radio and surf the internet.

However, very few Bangladeshis send text messages because most phones are not equipped to handle the Bangla alphabet.

At the end of February 2012, there were 87.9 million active mobile subscribers, according to the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BRTC).

The Nielsen 2011 Media and Demographic Survey found that 66% of all individuals aged 15 years and above owned at least one mobile phone with an active SIM.

The phenomenal growth of mobile telephones in Bangladesh has turned telecommunications into one of the largest and most lucrative sectors of the country's economy.

In 2010 the telecoms sector contributed 10% of government tax revenues and accounted for 60% of all foreign direct investment in Bangladesh.

### **Mobile telecoms**

According to the BRTC, the mobile network covers 98% of the population.

However, some 'mobile holes' still exist in the sparsely populated Chittagong Hill Tracts in the South East, the mangrove swamps of the Southern Sundarbans in the South West and in the extreme North West of Bangladesh.

There are six mobile networks in Bangladesh. However the sector is dominated by the three main service providers:

- **Grameenphone**
- **Banglalink**
- **Robi**

These three companies all have extensive network coverage throughout the country.

Together they account for nearly 90% of all mobile subscribers in Bangladesh.

Operators	Active Subscribers (millions)
Grameenphone	37.4
Banglalink	24.2
Robi	17.1
Airtel Bangladesh	6.2
Citycell	1.778
Teletalk	1.8
Total	87.9

#### **Mobile telephone subscribers by network**

*Source: BTRC, February 2012*

**Grameenphone** is the largest mobile operator with a market share of 43%.

It played a key role in popularizing mobile phones in rural areas by helping women to purchase handsets which they rented to other members of the community to make calls.

Mobile phones are mostly used for making voice calls in Bangladesh.

Few people send text messages because relatively few phones are equipped with Bangla script.

Furthermore, the Bangla scripts used by the different networks are not fully compatible with each other.

Most people use Bangla written phonetically in the Latin alphabet when sending text messages.

This requires knowledge of English.

However, Grameenphone now markets handsets with a Bangla alphabet keypad that generates Bangla script on screen.

According to the BRTC, SMS traffic in 2011 averaged 30 million messages per month.

That was the equivalent of just one text message each month for every three phones in the country.

Nevertheless, SMS messages are increasingly used to collect and disseminate information.

Occasionally the government broadcasts SMS messages to remind people to immunise their children and pay their taxes.

Since 2009 it has also broadcast cyclone warnings by SMS to people living in areas that may be affected by flooding.

Radio listeners and TV viewers are meanwhile encouraged to send messages to live programmes and vote in opinion polls and competitions.

Recorded voice messages are also used to provide information on demand.



Members of the public can dial a short code on any of Bangladesh's three mobile phone networks to hear a recording of the latest **BBC Bangla** news headlines. These are updated every hour.

**BBC Media Action** also offers a series of three-minute English lessons which can be listened to by mobile phone users at a discounted rate.

Although government taxes on SIMs are high, their sale price subsidised by the main mobile networks. SIM cards can be purchased for as little as 99 Taka (US \$1.30).

At the end of 2011 it cost around one Taka (1.5 US cents) per minute to make voice calls to subscribers on the same network.

Calls to other networks are typically twice as expensive at around two Taka (3 US cents) per minute. Many people have SIM cards for more than one network to avoid incurring these higher charges.

SMS messages cost around 50 Paisa (0.5 US cents) each.

Mobile money transfer services exist, but are not widely used.

Young people increasingly use their mobile phones to listen to the radio.

According to the 2011 Nielsen Media and Demographic Survey, nearly three quarters of all radio listeners regularly tune into programmes on their mobile handset.

Mobiles are also widely used to access the internet, particularly in small cities and peri-urban areas where educated and relatively affluent people live, but where broadband connections are not available.

According to the BRTC, there were 3.1 million internet subscribers in Bangladesh at the end of February 2012. Nearly 3.0 million of these accessed the web via the mobile network.

**Grameenphone** offers the most affordable internet packages for handset browsing at tariffs which start at 20 Taka (24 US cents) per day.

### **Fixed line telephones**

While mobile sales continue to soar, the number of fixed line phones in Bangladesh is declining.

According to the BTRC, there were just over a million fixed line connections in Bangladesh at the end of February 2012.

Nearly 88% of these were operated by the state-run Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL).

This company had a monopoly of fixed line telecoms until 1999, but it now faces competition from a handful of smaller private operators as well as the mobile sector.

### **Internet**

The Internet is increasingly popular, but is still largely limited to urban areas.

However, this is changing in part due to the government's 'Digital Bangladesh by 2021' initiative, which is backed by donor agencies.

According to the website [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com) there were 5.5 million internet users in Bangladesh at the end of 2011 – equivalent to 3.5% of the country's population.

The BRTC said that by the end of February there were 3.1 million internet subscribers in the country.

In 2007 the government constructed two community-based **e-centres** at the union parishad (UP) level – the lowest echelon of local government in order to test the introduction of IT services in rural areas.

Three years later, similar Union Information and Service Centres (UISC) had been built in each of the 4,498 union parishads in the country.

In October 2011 around 60% of the UISCs built in all the Union Parishads were reported to be functioning.

Difficulties at this early stage include low bandwidth, unreliable electric supplies, and a lack of bureaucratic commitment.

UISCs have also been built at the higher Upazilla and at the District levels of local government.

In principle they provide both online and offline information services to ordinary citizens, as well as allowing direct communication between Ministers and local administrations.

Internet services have also been introduced to rural areas by the Development Research Network [www.dnet.org.bd](http://www.dnet.org.bd).

This has established 165 Rural Information and Technological Centres, [www.pallitathya.org/p\\_english](http://www.pallitathya.org/p_english) which are essentially rural Internet cafés.

Linked to these, there are 131 Computer Literacy Centres [www.clp.net.bd](http://www.clp.net.bd).

The most popular Bangladeshi news website is that of **Prothom Alo** (First Light), the country's top-selling newspaper [www.prothom-alo.com](http://www.prothom-alo.com).

The independent and widely respected news website [www.bdnews24.com](http://www.bdnews24.com) follows close behind it.

News about Bangladesh is often faster to break online than on local TV or radio.

There have recently been several initiatives to use the internet to promote greater accountability in government.

In September 2011, the television talk show **Amader Sthaniyo Sarkar** (Our Local Government) established its own web portal [www.amadersthanijosarkar.com](http://www.amadersthanijosarkar.com) to get feedback from viewers and stimulate an informed public debate.

It was launched with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The website is an interactive platform that allows elected local government representatives, officials, academics, practitioners, NGOs and the wider population of Bangladesh to share ideas, opinions and views regarding issues highlighted in the TV show and local government issues in general.

**Nagorik Kontho** (Citizen's Voice) [www.nagorikkonkho.org](http://www.nagorikkonkho.org) is a similar pilot project that was established in three local government divisions in 2010.

Citizens can use the portal to comment on or complain about local public services such as healthcare, education, electricity and road maintenance.

The portal allows people to send in text, video or voice messages about specific local issues, to share their complaints, views and observations at a local level and ultimately at a higher administrative level.

The idea is that by giving citizens the opportunity to complain or comment publicly they will be empowered and the administration will be more likely to take action.

Broadband tariffs have fallen rapidly in recent years and home internet connections are now affordable for many urban people.

The average the subscription fee for a home internet connection is 800 Taka per month (US\$10.60).

Mobile internet connections cost from about 2,000 Taka (US\$20) per month upwards, depending on the intensity of usage.

There are many Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Bangladesh, but traffic is dominated by Grameenphone.

Government policy restricts the use of V-Sat connections to official bodies.

## **Telecommunications Companies**

**Grameenphone** [www.grameenphone.com](http://www.grameenphone.com)

Grameenphone is largest GSM Mobile company in Bangladesh with a nationwide network and a 43% market share in early 2012.

It had more than 37.4 million subscribers at the end of February 2012.

The company has invested massively in building a mobile network which covers 98% of the country.

An interactive mobile coverage map for GrameenPhone can be found here:

[http://www.europa.uk.com/cgi-bin/ni\\_map\\_jpkd.pl?x=0&y=0&z=0&cc=bd&net=gr&opts=4](http://www.europa.uk.com/cgi-bin/ni_map_jpkd.pl?x=0&y=0&z=0&cc=bd&net=gr&opts=4)

Grameenphone is a joint venture enterprise between the Norwegian-based global telecoms company Telenor (55.8%) and Grameen Telecom (34.2%), a not-for-profit sister company of Grameen Bank, the micro-credit pioneer founded by Mohammed Yunis.

The remaining equity is split between retail and institutional investors.

Grameenphone introduced prepaid mobile phone credit to Bangladesh in 1999 and played a key role in popularising the adoption of mobile telephony in rural areas.

Its Village Phone Program, started in 1997, has provided small loans to equip 210,000 Village Phone operators in rural areas. These people earn a living by charging their neighbours to make calls on their handset.

The overwhelming majority of the Village Phone Operators are women. The micro-loans are provided by Grameenbank and the scheme is administered by Grameen Telecom.

Grameenphone has also become a leading provider of mobile broadband internet connections in Bangladesh. Its stated ambition is to become the biggest Internet Service Provider in the country.

In late 2011 there were nearly 2.6 million EDGE/GPRS users in the Grameenphone network.

Grameenphone allows customers to transfer credit balances from one SIM card to another, but does not operate a classic mobile money transfer business.

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**Grameen Telecom** [www.grameentelecom.net.bd/](http://www.grameentelecom.net.bd/)

Grameen Telecom is the holding company for the Grameen group's 34.2% stake in Grameenphone.

It also operates the Village Phone business that provides modern telecommunication services to the poor.

Grameen Telecom selects the Village Phone Operators and helps them to obtain a micro-loan from Grameen Bank to purchase a mobile phone linked to the Grameenphone network.

The phone owners earn a living by charging members of their community a flat fee for each call made plus, a commission over and above the standard call charge.

Grameen Bank, which provides collateral-free loans to the poor in Bangladesh, helps Grameen Telecom to select credit-worthy customers to participate in the scheme.

A Grameen Bank customer member, who has a good record of loan repayment and is literate or has a family member who can read and write, is entitled to get a Village Phone.

The number of Village Phone Operators peaked at 280,000 in 2007, but has since declined to 210,000 as more and more people in the countryside have acquired their own personal handsets.

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Email: [info@grameentelecom.net.bd](mailto:info@grameentelecom.net.bd)

Address: Grameen Telecom, Grameen Bank Complex, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216

**Banglalink** [www.banglalinkgsm.com](http://www.banglalinkgsm.com)

Banglalink is the second largest mobile phone company in Bangladesh.



According to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (BRTC), it had 24.2 million subscribers at the end of February 2012 and a 28% market share.



**Banglalink mobile coverage map**

*Source: Banglalink website*

The company is owned by Orascom Telecom, an Egyptian mobile phone company which forms part of the Orascom industrial group.

Banglalink offers a service which allows people overseas to make cash remittances to friends and family at home by mobile phone. This service is provided in collaboration with Western Union and two local banks.

Banglalink customers can also pay utility bills and buy insurance and train tickets by mobile phone.

However, the company does not offer a fully fledged domestic cash transfer service.

Chief Executive - Ahmed Abou Doma

Tel:

Email: [info@banglalinkgsm.com](mailto:info@banglalinkgsm.com)

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**Robi** [www.robi.com.bd](http://www.robi.com.bd)

<http://www.robi.com.bd/index.php/page/view/307-content>

Robi is third largest mobile network operator in Bangladesh.

It had 17.1 million customers and a market share of 19% at the end of February 2012.

The company is a joint venture between Axiata Group Berhad of Malaysia (70%) and NTT DOCOMO of Japan (30%).

It began operations as Aktel in 1997 and was rebranded as Robi in 2010.

In September 2011, the company claimed that its network covered 97.5% of the population and 87% of Bangladesh's land area.

Robi customers can transfer credit balances from one SIM card to another and can pay water and electricity bills by mobile phone through the company's mPay service in some parts of the country, but the company does not offer a fully-fledged cash transfer facility. Robi offers internet browsing on mobile handsets from 55 Taka (55 US cents) per day.

A network coverage map for Robi can be found at: [http://www.europa.uk.com/cgi-bin/ni\\_map\\_jpkd.pl?x=0&y=0&z=0&cc=bd&net=tm&opts=4](http://www.europa.uk.com/cgi-bin/ni_map_jpkd.pl?x=0&y=0&z=0&cc=bd&net=tm&opts=4).

Chief Executive - Michael Kuehner

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Email: ????

Address: Robi Corporate Centre, 53 Gulshan South Avenue, Gulshan 1, Dhaka 1212

**Airtel** [www.waridtel.com.bd](http://www.waridtel.com.bd)

India's mobile telecom giant Bharti Airtel acquired a 70% stake in Warid Telecom Bangladesh in 2010 and rebranded the company Airtel.

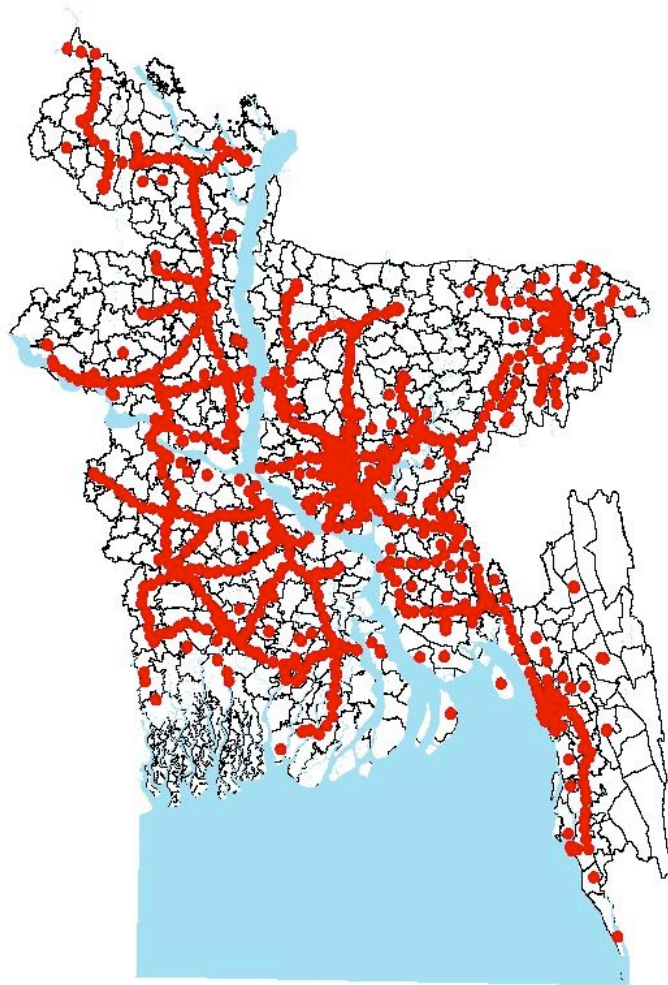
Airtel is one of Bangladesh's newest mobile telecoms companies. It started operations in 2006.

But it has grown fast since the Airtel takeover which was accompanied by a \$300 million investment to expand its infrastructure. This is the largest single investment ever made in Bangladesh by an Indian company.

By February 2012, Airtel had become the fourth largest mobile operator in Bangladesh, with 6.2 million customers, but a very modest market share of just 7%.

Its network covers Bangladesh's main towns and transport routes, but is still thin in many rural areas.

Warid Telecom, which is based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), continues to hold a 30% minority stake in the company.



Chief Executive - Chris Tobit

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**Citycell** Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.

Citycell is Bangladesh's only mobile operator that uses CDMA technology instead of GSM, the world standard.

The company is partly owned by Singapore Telecom.

In February 2012, it had 1.8 million subscribers.

Citycell offers a mobile broadband service in several of Bangladesh's main cities.

An inter-active map of its overall mobile coverage is available on the following web page: <http://www.citycell.com/index.php?pageid=25>.

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Address: Citycell, Pacific Centre, 14 Mohakhali C/A Dhaka-1212.

**Tele Talk** [www.teletalk.com.bd](http://www.teletalk.com.bd)

Teletalk is a government-owned mobile phone company that was launched in 2004.

It was the smallest network operator in Bangladesh in February 2012, with just under 1.3 million subscribers.

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**Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd. (BTCL)** [www.btcl.gov.bd](http://www.btcl.gov.bd)

State-owned BTCL is a telephone company that operates the largest landline network in Bangladesh.

In February 2012, BTCL had just over 872,000 subscribers and an 88% share of the fixed line telephone sector.

In recent years the company has suffered strong competition from mobile competitors. Its subscriber numbers have been falling.

The company also uses its fibre-optic network and copper wires to distribute the internet.

Managing Director – Azizul Islam

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BTCL fibre optic network in 2010

Source: BTCL website