



Country Profile



MOHIUDDIN AHMED KHAN

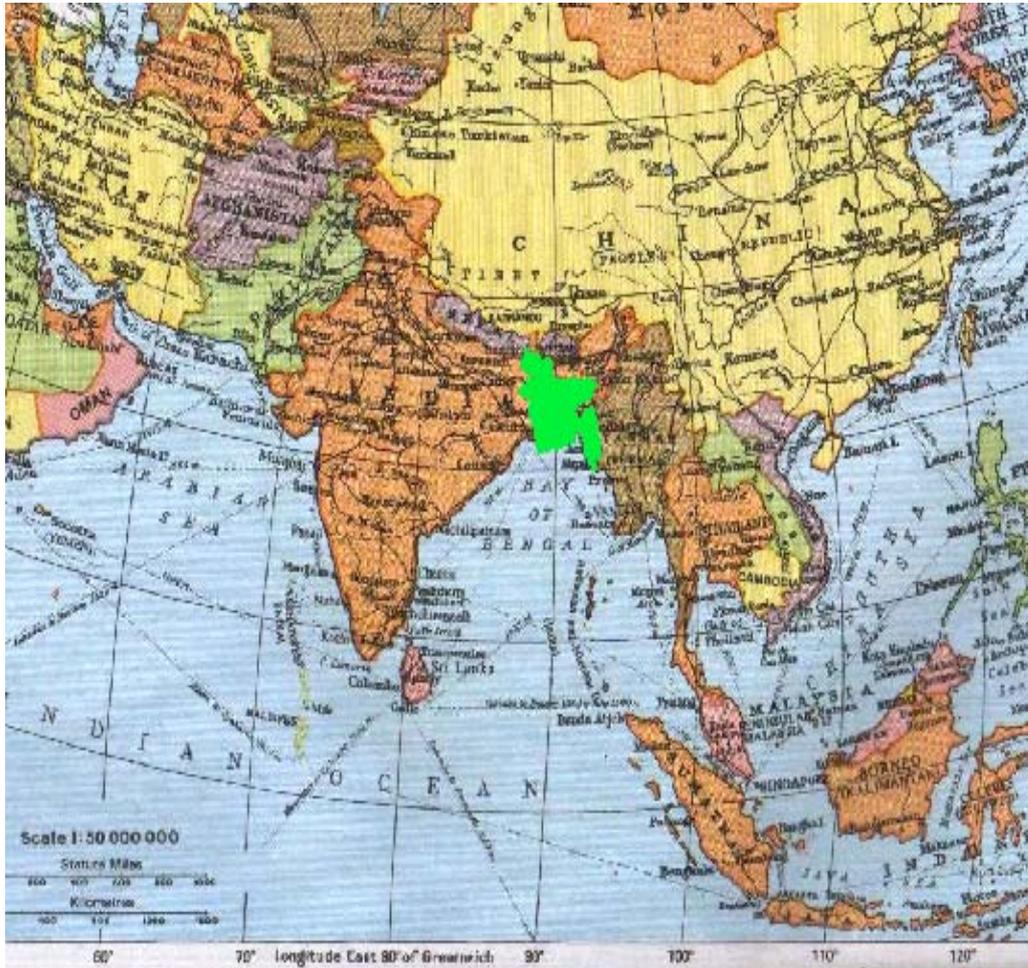
DEPUTY SECRETARY

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RELIEF DIVISION,

BANGLADESH

COUNTRY PROFILE

LOCATION OF BANGLADESH



Bangladesh officially People's Republic of Bangladesh (Gano Prajatantri Bangladesh) is a country in Southeast Asia. It is bordered by India on all sides except for a small border with Burma (Myanmar) and by the Bay of Bengal to the south.

Climate:

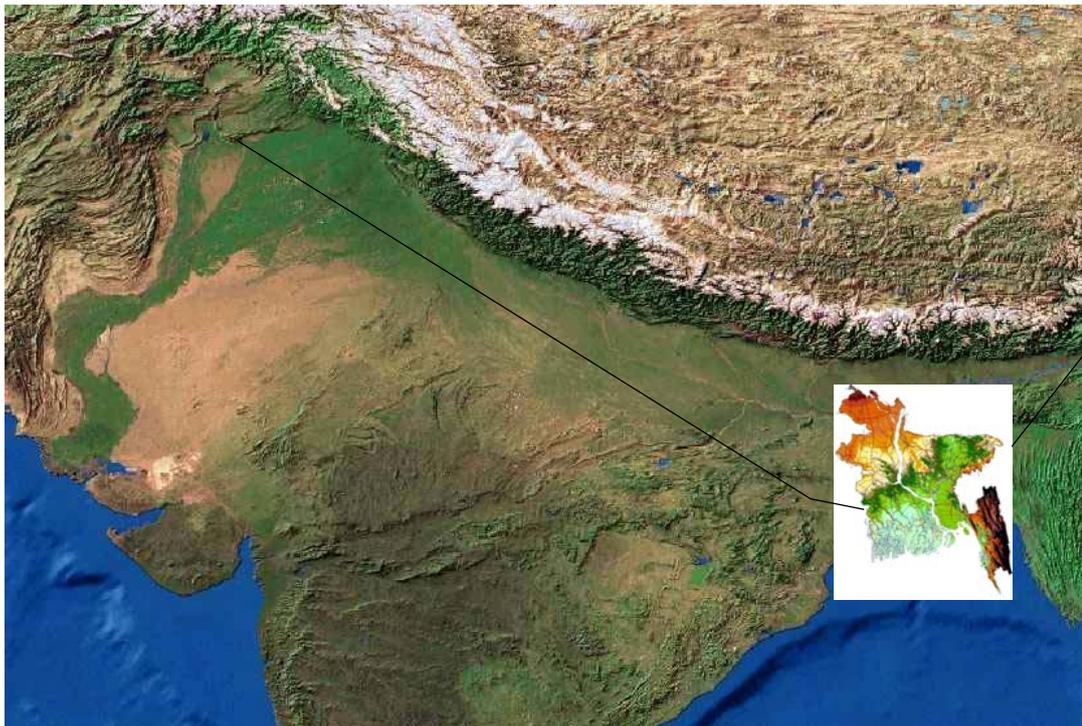
Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon climate marked by sweltering temperatures and high humidity. Bangladesh lies between 20°34" and 26°38" north, between 88°01", and 92°41" east. Its climate is tropical and humid. The country has mainly four seasons e.g. pre-monsoon (March to May), monsoon (June to September), post-monsoon (October to November) and dry (December to February). Its climate is influenced by the Indian Ocean monsoon climate. During summer and

monsoon tropical cyclones, storms and tidal bores are not uncommon. The average annual rainfall is between 2200 and 2500 mm, but the maximum range is between 1200 to 5000mm. About 80% of the rainfall occurs during the monsoon i.e. from June to September. The average temperature varies from 25 to 35°C year. Sometimes it falls below 10°C during winter.

Topography

The topography is mostly flat, except in some parts in the northeast and southeast, which are hilly. The entire country is a delta formed by the deposition of sediments carried by the three large river systems, i.e. the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna. Some older deposits also exist in the central and western parts of the country. Hilly areas occupy 12, terrace areas 8% and flood plains 80% of the country. The land elevation varies from -3 to 90 MSL. More than 50% of the flood plains are within 5 MSL.

Location of Bangladesh in South Asia



1

People

Nationality: Noun and adjective--Bangladeshi(s).

Population (July 2009): 135 million.

Annual population growth rate (July 2009 CIA est.): 1.29%.

Ethnic groups (1998,): Bengali 98%, other 2% (including tribal groups, non-Bengali Muslims).

Religions (1998,): Muslim 83%; Hindu 16%; Christian 0.3%, Buddhist 0.6%, others 0.3%.

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

Education: Attendance--61%. Adult literacy rate--47.5%. (UNDP Human Development Index 2007/2008)

Health (Ministry of Health): Infant mortality rate (below 1)--59/1,000. Life expectancy-- 60.25 years.

Work force (70.86 million): Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries--63%; manufacturing--11%; mining and quarrying--0.2%.

Government

Type: Parliamentary democracy.

Independence: 1971 (from Pakistan).

Constitution: 1972; amended 1974, 1979, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1996, 2004.

Branches: Executive--president (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), cabinet. Legislative--unicameral Parliament (345 members). Judicial--civil court system based on British model.

Administrative subdivisions: Divisions, districts, sub districts, unions, villages.

Political parties: 30-40 active political parties. Largest ones include Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the Awami League (AL), the Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat-e-Islami Party.

Suffrage: Universal at age 18.

Economy:

Bangladesh has an agrarian economy. Agriculture accounts for nearly 46 percent of the GDP and provides employment to more than 61 percent of the workforce. Jute and rice are main cash crops. Other crops are tea, sugarcane, oilseeds, vegetables, spices, wheat, potatoes, tobacco and cotton. The major industry in Bangladesh is jute processing followed by cotton, steel, garments and pharmaceutical.

Fiscal year: July 1 to June 30.

Annual GDP growth rate (FY 2008): 6.2%; (FY 2008 World Bank est.): below 6%.

Current GDP (2008 est.): \$84.2 billion (official); \$226.4 billion (PPP).

Per capita GDP (2008 est.): \$554 (official); \$1,500 (PPP).

Inflation (December 2008): 6.03% (point to point basis) and 8.9% (monthly average basis).

Exchange rate: Dec. 2009: U.S. \$1=69.03 BDT; 2008: U.S. \$1=68.55 BDT; 2007: U.S. \$1=69.89 BDT.

Annual budget (2008 est.): \$12.54 billion.

Natural resources: Natural gas, fertile soil, water.

Agriculture (19.1% of GDP): Products--rice, jute, tea, sugar, wheat.

Industry (manufacturing; 28.6% of GDP): Types--garments and knitwear, jute goods, frozen fish and seafood, textiles, fertilizer, sugar, tea, leather, ship-breaking for scrap, pharmaceuticals, ceramic tableware, newsprint.

Trade:

Total imports (FY 2008)--\$21.6 billion: capital goods, food grains, petroleum, textiles, chemicals, vegetable oils. Growth rate over previous fiscal year: 25.95%. Total exports (FY 2008)--\$14.11 billion: garments and knitwear, frozen fish, jute and jute goods, leather and leather products, tea, urea fertilizer, ceramic tableware. Growth rate over previous fiscal year: 16.04%. Exports to U.S. (Jan.-Dec. 2008)--\$3.74 billion. Imports from U.S. (Jan.-Dec. 2008)--\$468.1 million.

Geographical information

Bangladesh is a low-lying, riparian country located in South Asia with a largely marshy jungle coastline of 710 kilometers (440 mi.) on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal. Formed by a deltaic plain at the confluence of the Ganges (Padma), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and Meghna Rivers and their tributaries, Bangladesh's alluvial soil is highly fertile but vulnerable to flood and drought. Hills rise above the plain only in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the far southeast and the Sylhet division in the northeast. Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, Bangladesh has a subtropical monsoonal climate characterized by heavy seasonal rainfall, moderately warm temperatures, and high humidity. Natural calamities, such as floods, tropical cyclones, tornadoes, and tidal bores affect the country almost every year. Bangladesh also is affected by major cyclones on average 16 times a decade.

The areas around Dhaka and Comilla are the most densely settled. The Sundarbans, an area of coastal tropical jungle in the southwest and last wild home of the Bengal tiger, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts on the southeastern border with Burma and India, are the least densely populated.

Origin of People

The area that is now Bangladesh has a rich historical and cultural past, combining Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Mongol/Mughul, Arab, Persian, Turkic, and west European cultures. Residents of Bangladesh, about 98% of whom are ethnic Bengali and speak Bangla, are called Bangladeshis. Urdu-speaking, non-Bengali Muslims of Indian origin, and various tribal groups, mostly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, comprise the remainder. English is spoken in urban areas and among the educated.

Sufi religious teachers succeeded in converting many Bengalis to Islam, even before the arrival of Muslim armies from the west. About 1200 AD, Muslim invaders established political control over the Bengal region. This political control also encouraged conversion to Islam. Since then, Islam has played a crucial role in the region's history and politics, with a Muslim majority emerging, particularly in the eastern region of Bengal.

History

Bengal was absorbed into the Mughul Empire in the 16th century, and Dhaka, the seat of a Nawab (the representative of the emperor), gained some importance as a provincial center. But it remained remote and thus a difficult to govern region--especially the section east of the Brahmaputra River--outside the mainstream of Mughul politics. Portuguese traders and missionaries were the first Europeans to reach Bengal in the latter part of the 15th century. They were followed by representatives of the Dutch, French, and British East India Companies. By the end of the 17th century, the British presence on the Indian subcontinent was centered in Calcutta. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the British gradually extended their commercial contacts and administrative control beyond Calcutta to Bengal. In 1859, the British Crown replaced the East India Company, extending British dominion from Bengal, which became a region of India, in the east to the Indus River in the west.

When British India was partitioned and the independent dominions of India and Pakistan were created in 1947, the region of Bengal was divided along religious lines. The predominantly Muslim eastern half was designated East Pakistan--and made part of the newly independent Pakistan--while the predominantly Hindu western part became the Indian state of West Bengal. Pakistan's history from 1947 to 1971 was marked by political instability and economic difficulties.

Almost from the advent of independent Pakistan in 1947, frictions developed between East and West Pakistan, which were separated by more than 1,000 miles of Indian territory. East Pakistanis felt exploited by the West Pakistan-dominated central government. Linguistic, cultural, and ethnic differences also contributed to the estrangement of East from West Pakistan.

On March 26, 1971, following a bloody crackdown by the Pakistan Army, Bengali nationalists declared an independent People's Republic of Bangladesh. As fighting grew between the army and the Bengali Mukti Bahini ("freedom fighters"), an estimated 10 million Bengalis, sought refuge in the Indian states of Assam and West Bengal. On April 17, 1971, a provisional government was formed in Meherpur district in western Bangladesh bordering India with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was in prison in Pakistan, as President, Syed Nazrul Islam as Acting President, and Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister. On December 16, 1971, Pakistani forces surrendered, and Bangladesh--meaning "Bengal country"--was born; the new country became a parliamentary democracy under a 1972 constitution.

The first government of the new nation of Bangladesh was formed in Dhaka with Justice Abu Sayeed Choudhury as President, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ("Mujib")--who was released from Pakistani prison in early 1972--as Prime Minister.

Patterns of Government

The prime minister is appointed by the president. The prime minister must be a Member of Parliament (MP) who the president feels commands the confidence of the majority of other MPs. The cabinet is composed of ministers selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president. At least 90% of the ministers must be MPs. The other 10% may be non-MP experts or "technocrats" who are not otherwise disqualified from being elected MPs. According to the constitution, the president can dissolve Parliament upon the written request of the prime minister.

The legislature is a unicameral, 300-seat body. All of its members are elected by universal suffrage at least every five years. Parliament amended the constitution in May 2004, making a provision for 45 seats reserved for women to be distributed among political parties in proportion to their numerical strength in Parliament. Several women's groups have demanded direct election to fill the reserved seats for women.

Bangladesh's judiciary is a civil court system based on the British model; the highest court of appeal is the appellate court of the Supreme Court. At the local government level, the country is divided into divisions, districts, sub districts, unions, and villages. Local officials are elected at the union level and selected at the village level. All larger administrative units are run by members of the civil service.

Agriculture

Most Bangladeshis earn their living from agriculture. Although rice and jute are the primary crops, maize and vegetables are assuming greater importance. Due to the expansion of irrigation networks, some wheat producers have switched to cultivation of maize which is used mostly as poultry feed. Tea is grown in the northeast. Because of Bangladesh's fertile soil and normally ample water supply, rice can be grown and harvested three times a year in many areas. Due to a number of factors, Bangladesh's labor-intensive agriculture has achieved steady increases in food grain production despite the often unfavorable weather conditions. These include better flood control and irrigation, a generally more efficient use of fertilizers, and the establishment of better distribution and rural credit networks. With 28.8 million metric tons produced in 2005-2006 (July-June), rice is Bangladesh's principal crop. By comparison, wheat output in 2005-2006 was 9 million metric tons. Population pressure continues to place a severe burden on productive capacity, creating a food deficit, especially of wheat.

Industry and Investment

Fortunately for Bangladesh, many new jobs--1.8 million, mostly for women--have been created by the country's dynamic private ready-made garment industry, which grew at double-digit rates through most of the 1990s. The labor-intensive process of ship-breaking for scrap has developed to the point where it now meets most of Bangladesh's domestic steel needs. Other industries include sugar, tea, leather goods, newsprint, pharmaceutical, and fertilizer production. The country has done less well, however, in expanding its export base--garments account for more than three-fourths of all exports, dwarfing the country's historic cash crop, jute, along with leather, shrimp, pharmaceuticals, and The Bangladesh Government continues to court foreign investment. Bangladesh also has established export processing zones in Chittagong (1983), Dhaka (1994), Comilla (2000), Mongla (2001), Iswardi (2005), Uttara (2006), and Karnafully (2007).

Administrative Unit:

The lowest administrative unit is the union run by an elected union council. Each union comprises about 20,000 inhabitants and about 8-10 unions cluster into Upazila(sub district). Government services are concentrated at Upazila level. There are about 472 Upazila in Bangladesh. Several Upazila form a district. The total number of districts stands at 64. The entire country broadly divided into six administrative divisions, namely Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet.

Natural Hazards in Bangladesh

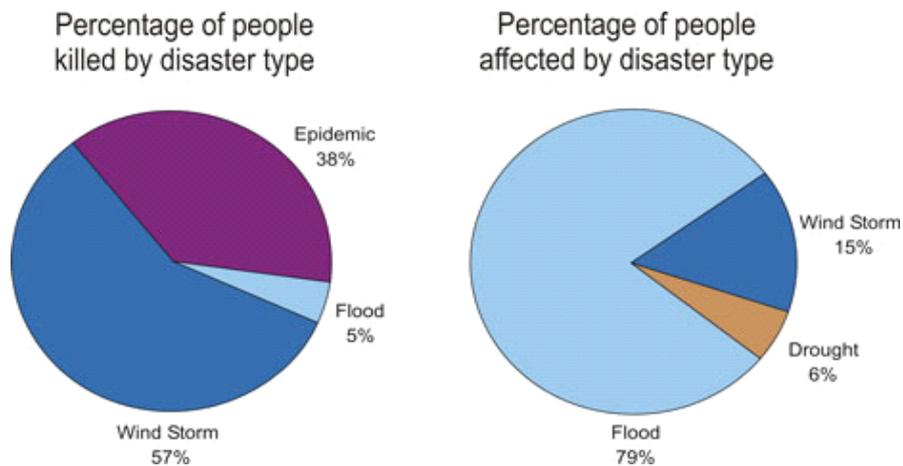
Natural Hazards Likely to Affect the Country:

Historical statistics would suggest that Bangladesh is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world with great negative consequences being associated with various natural and human induced hazards. The geophysical location, land characteristics, multiplicity of rivers and the monsoon climate render Bangladesh highly vulnerable to natural hazards. The coastal morphology of Bangladesh influences the impact of natural hazards on the area. Especially in the south eastern area, natural hazards increase the vulnerability of the coastal dwellers.

Disasters and Bangladesh

- Flood
- Tropical Cyclone
- Storm Surge
- Tornado
- River Bank Erosion
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Arsenic
- Fire

Natural Disaster from 1904-2004



Source : ISDR website

Natural and human induced hazards such as floods, cyclones, droughts, storm surges, tornadoes, earthquakes, riverbank erosion, fire, infrastructure collapse, the high arsenic contents of ground water, water logging, water and soil salinity, epidemic, and various forms of pollution are frequent occurrences. Over the years, Bangladesh has developed an elaborate system of disaster management. However, in the past, the focus of disaster management had been relief and rehabilitation.

Key factors of vulnerability

- Geographical location
- Dominance of flood plains
- Low elevation from the sea
- Global warming & climate change
- High population density
- High level of poverty

Major Disasters in Bangladesh

Year	Disaster	Death
1970	Cyclone	470,000
1988	Flood	2373
1988	Cyclone	5704
1989	Drought	800
1991	Cyclone	138,882
1996	Tornado	545
1997	Cyclone	550
1998	Flood	918
2004	Flood	747
2007	Flood	800
2007	Cyclone	3,406
2009	Cyclone	190

1

Recent Major Disaster in Bangladesh: Cyclone “Aila”.

Almost 200 disaster events have occurred causing more than 500,000 deaths and leaving prolonged damage to livelihoods, infrastructure and the economy of Bangladesh shocked by cyclone 'Aila' This tidal surge severely damaged both life and property in southern western coastal districts of

Bangladesh. In the early hours of 25th May,2009 at noon, the cyclone "Aila" hit the Bangladesh coastal districts, at a wind of 60-70KPH accompanied by 8-10 feet tidal surges above normal tide.

Some pictures of 'Aila' Affected Areas and Sufferings of people





Recent Major Disaster in Bangladesh:

The Path way of the severe cyclone 'Aila' which affected coastal Belt of Bangladesh in 2009 .

Regulative Framework

In order to manage the paradigm shift in disaster management, a disaster management regulative framework is established under which the Bangladesh Disaster Management Framework is implemented, and in which work of Ministries, Departments, NGOs and civil society are undertaken. The regulative framework provides the relevant legislative, policy and best practice framework under which the activity of Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response Management in Bangladesh is managed and implemented. The framework is comprised of:

Disaster Management Act (to be enacted)

The Disaster Management Act creates the legislative framework under which disaster risk reduction and emergency response management is undertaken in Bangladesh, and the legal basis in which activities and actions are managed. It also creates mandatory obligations and responsibilities on Ministries, committees and appointments.

National Disaster Management Policy (to be adopted)

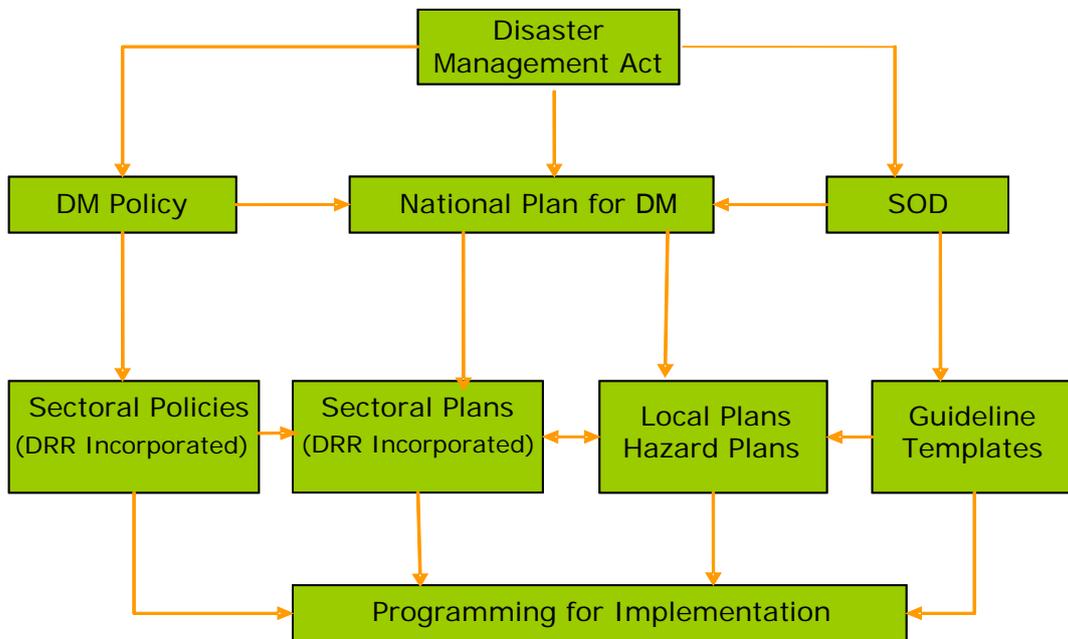
The National Disaster Management Policy defines the national policy on disaster risk reduction and emergency response management. and describes the strategic policy framework, and national principles of disaster management in Bangladesh. It is strategic in nature and describes the broad national objectives, and strategies in disaster management.

National Plan for Disaster Management

The National Plan for Disaster Management defines in broad outline the systemic and institutional mechanisms under which disaster risk reduction and emergency response management is undertaken in Bangladesh. It outlines disaster management vision, strategic goals and conceptual framework. It establishes disaster management regulative and planning frameworks, and identifies priority areas for disaster risk reduction and emergency response management



Disaster Management Regulative Framework



1

Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD)

The Standing Orders on Disaster outlines the disaster management arrangements in Bangladesh and describes the detailed roles and responsibilities of committees, Ministries, Departments and other organizations involved in disaster risk reduction and emergency response management, and establishes the necessary actions required in implementing Bangladesh's Disaster Management Model, e.g., defining the risk environment, managing the risk environment, and responding to the threat environment.



Coordinated Response to Disaster Emergency



1

NATIONAL DISASTER CONTEXT

- Frequently hit by various natural disasters like Cyclones, Storm surges, Floods, Tornadoes, Droughts and other calamities.
- Monsoon flooding is an annual occurrence shaping lives and livelihoods.
- Almost 200 disaster events have occurred causing more than 500,000 deaths and leaving prolonged damage to livelihoods, infrastructure and the economy.
- Climate change is likely to cause significant impact in the form of severe floods, cyclones, droughts, sea level rise and salinity affecting agriculture, livelihoods, natural orders, water supply, health etc.
- The disaster vulnerable people demonstrates strong coping capacity to face the disaster challenges.

GOB Vision on Disaster Management

To reduce the vulnerability of people, especially the poor, to the effects of natural, environmental and human induced hazards to a manageable and acceptable humanitarian level

Mission:

- to bring a paradigm shift in disaster management from conventional response and relief to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture

Overall Objective:

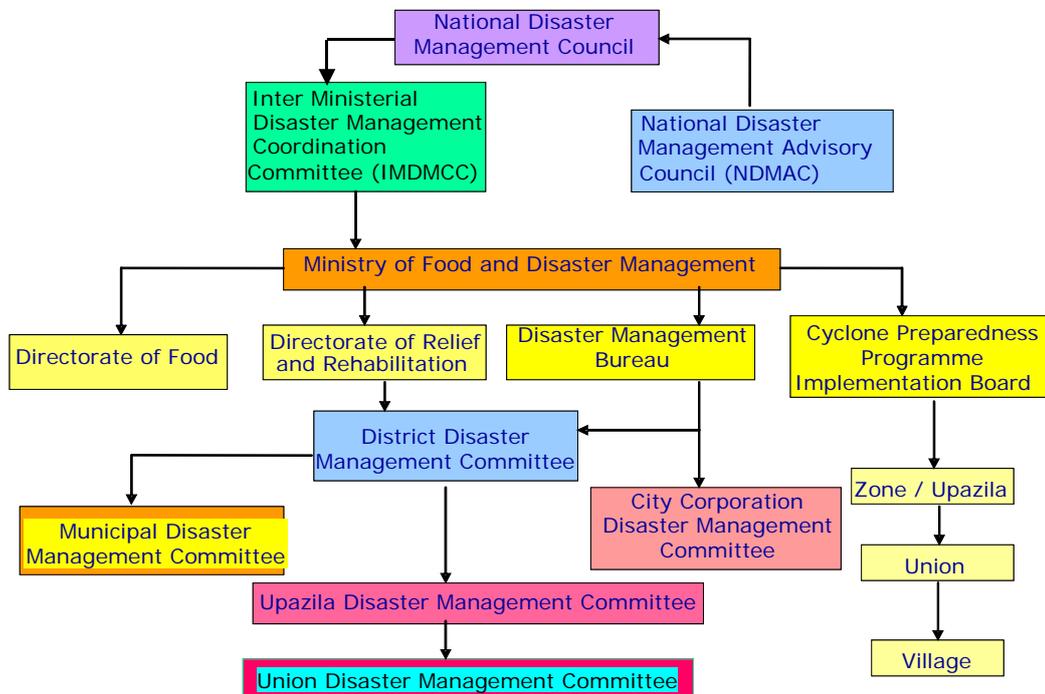
- to strengthen the capacity of the Bangladesh Disaster Management System

National and international Drivers

- Millennium Development Goals (MDG)
- Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- SAARC Framework for Action (SFA)



Disaster Management Institutions in Bangladesh



1

National Committees under SOD

- National Disaster Management Council (NDMC)
- Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Co-ordination Committee (IMDMCC)
- National Disaster Management Advisory Committee (NDMAC)
- Cyclone Preparedness Program Implementation Board (CPPIB)
- Disaster Management Training and Public Awareness Building Task Force (DMTATF)
- Focal Point Operation Coordination Group of Disaster Management (FPOCG)
- NGO Coordination Committee on Disaster Management (NGOCC)
- Committee for Speedy Dissemination of Disaster Related Warning/ Signals (CSDDWS)

Field Level Committees under SOD

- District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) headed by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) to co-ordinate and review the disaster management activities at the district level
- Upazila Disaster Management Committee (UZDMC) headed by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) to co-ordinate and review the disaster management activities at the Upazila level
- Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) headed by the Chairman of the Union Parishad to co-ordinate, review and implement the disaster management activities of the concerned union
- Pourashava Disaster Management Committee (PDMC) headed by Chairman of Pourashava (municipality) to co-ordinate, review and implement the disaster management activities within its area of jurisdiction
- City Corporation Disaster Management Committee (CCDMC) headed by the Mayor of City Corporations to co-ordinate, review and implement the disaster management activities within its area of jurisdiction.

Infrastructure for Disaster Risk Reduction

- Over 2,500 Cyclone Shelters along the coastal belt of Bangladesh.
- Killas (Elevated Land) for Shelter of Livestock.
- Flood Protection Embankment along coast line.
- 1400 Flood Shelters in Flood-Prone Areas.

Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP)

- Community Based Early warning through devoted volunteers.
- A Joint Venture Program of GOB & BDRCS.
- To minimize loss of lives and properties in cyclonic disaster by strengthening the capacity in disaster management of the coastal people of Bangladesh.
- Covers 11 districts and 32 Upazilas (Sub-District).
- Total Volunteers: 42675

Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP)

CDMP is a strategic institutional and programming approach that is designed to optimize the reduction of long-term risk and to strengthen the operational capacities for responding to emergencies and disaster situations including actions to improve recovery from these events.

Strategic Focus Areas:

- Professionalizing the Disaster Management System: Establishment of Policy Program Partnership Development Unit, Professionalizing development of Disaster Management System, etc.
- Partnership Development: Advocacy and Capacity Building of DMCs.
- Community Empowerment: Program Gap Analysis, Risk Reduction Planning, Livelihood Security and hazard Awareness, etc.
- Expanding Preparedness Program across a broader range of hazards: Earthquake and Tsunami Preparedness , Climate Change and Research.
- Strengthening Emergency Response Capabilities: DMIC and Response Management.

Implementation of Hyogo Framework in Bangladesh

Adopting action-plan 2005-2015, Building the Resilience of nations and communications to Disasters at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan in January 2005, the 168 Governments present and recognized their critical role in working with other actors to reduce disaster at national and local levels.

The first of the Hyogo Framework's five priorities of Action is to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes a national basis for implementation in Bangladesh

Limitations

- Insufficient Cyclone & Flood Shelter and Killa (elevated land for livestock).
- Insufficient coastal Embankment & Afforestation.
- Insufficient Equipments for Search & Rescue after earthquake .
- Needs countrywide Volunteers specially for earthquake.
- Needs huge investment for combating River Erosion.

Conclusion

- Disaster Management in Bangladesh had gone through a process of significant reforms.
- Following the devastating cyclone of 1991, the focus has been shifted towards adaptation of a holistic approach that embraces processes of hazard identification and mitigation, community preparedness and integrated response efforts.
- The development of mechanisms with regional and global partners for education, training and knowledge sharing on risk reduction applications is urgently needed.
- Special Fund for disaster-prone nations seeking technical and financial support to initiate risk reduction programs is also needed.