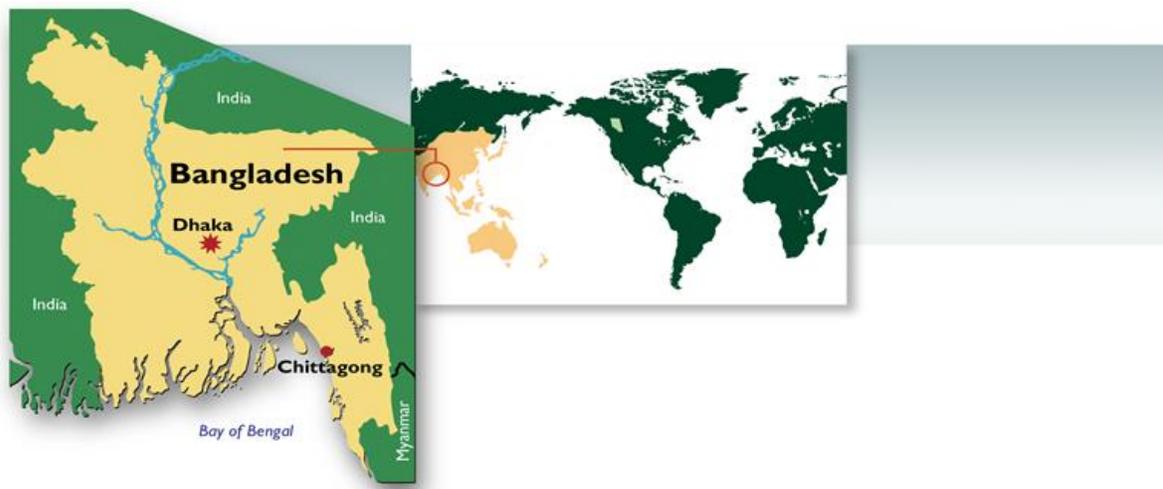


# Bangladesh – Alberta Relations



## PROFILE

**Capital:** Dhaka.

**Population:** 160 million (2016).

**Language:** Bangla (Bengali); Urdu and Hindi are minority languages.

**Government:** Parliamentary democracy.

**Head of State:** President Abdul Hamid.

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (Awami League).

**Currency:** CAD \$1 = 58.17518 Bangladesh Taka (BDT), (2016).

**GDP:** US \$264.78 billion (2015).

**GDP Purchasing Power Parity (PPP):** US \$587.7 billion (2015).

**GDP Per Capita:** US \$1,656.38 (2015).

**GDP Growth Rate:** 6.81 per cent (2015).

**Inflation:** 6.4 per cent (2015).

**Key Industry Sectors:** Cotton textiles, jute, garments, tea processing, paper newsprint, cement, chemical fertilizer, light engineering, and sugar.

*Sources:*  
*Global Affairs Canada, International Monetary Fund, The World Factbook*

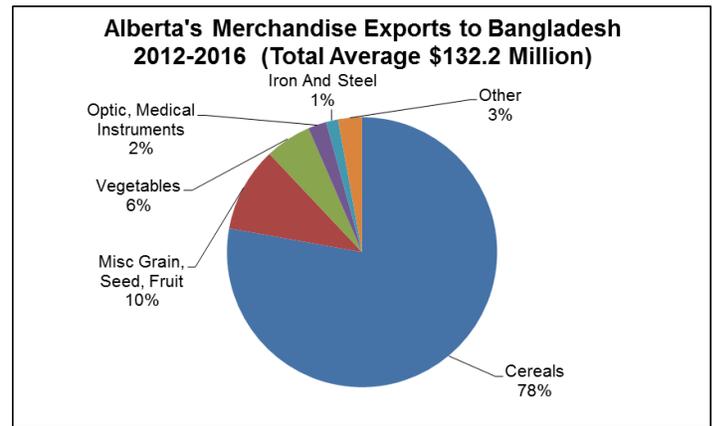
## OVERVIEW

- Formerly East Pakistan, Bangladesh came into existence only in 1971, when the two parts of Pakistan split after a bitter civil war, which drew in neighboring India.
- Canada established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh in 1972.
- The Parliament of Bangladesh (Jatiyo Sangshad) is a unicameral legislature consisting of 350 members, 300 of which are directly elected. The remaining 50 seats are reserved for women, who are elected by the members of parliament. Legislative terms are for 5 years.
- The President, who also serves a five-year term, with a two-term limit, is elected by the Parliament. The President is responsible for appointing the leader of the legislative majority party (or coalition) as Prime Minister.
- The Taka is currently pegged to a trade-weighted currency basket but the reference currency in exchange rate management is the US dollar.
- Bangladesh is the world's largest jute exporter.
- The word Bangladesh literally means 'wetland'. About a third of the country annually floods during the monsoon rainy season.

- Bangladesh is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), created in 1985 to help promote regional economic cooperation as well as economic and social development.
- The Alberta government has provided matching grants for humanitarian projects in Bangladesh for projects that have mainly focused on the improvement of education and school facilities. Relief funds were also provided to aid in the recovery of the 2007 cyclone.
- Bangladesh and Canada are both members of the Commonwealth. Bangladesh also uses the English Common Law System.

## TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- From 2012 to 2016, Alberta exports to Bangladesh averaged CDN \$132.2 million per year. Top exports include cereals, miscellaneous grain, seed, fruit, vegetables, iron, and steel.
- From 2012 to 2016, Alberta's average imports from Bangladesh were approximately CDN \$9 million per year. Top imports include woven apparel and miscellaneous textile articles.
- The Government of Bangladesh has set up export processing zones (EPZs) in Dhaka and Chittagong (the country's major port) to attract foreign investors and offers generous tax concessions to firms that locate within these EPZs.



## ENERGY

- Bangladesh has small reserves of oil and coal but it is important to world energy markets because of its large potential natural gas reserves.
- Bangladesh may become a major gas producer, with net proven reserves of 5 trillion cubic feet (tcf) and an additional 32.1 tcf in "undiscovered reserves". Alberta has 42.0 tcf in proven natural gas reserves.
- Bangladesh's location near India, plus Southeast Asia, makes it a potentially important regional energy trading hub.

## EDUCATION AND CULTURE

- The University of Alberta partnered with Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in a CIDA funded Institutional Linkage Project. The project's goal was to help respond to the growing need in Bangladesh for engineers, specializing in the energy and water sectors. The project had 2 phases: Phase 1 from 1994 to 1999 and Phase 2 from 2002 to 2006.
- Bangladesh has been a source of international students at the University of Alberta. As of January 2017, there are 64 students in the undergraduate level with another 103 in graduate level studies.
- Between 2011 and 2015, 456 citizens of Bangladesh had international study permits come into effect for Alberta.

## COMMUNITY

- Approximately 2,740 Albertans are of Bangladeshi descent.
- Between 2011 and 2015, 1,436 citizens of Bangladesh became Permanent Residents of Canada, with Alberta as their intended destination. Approximately 74 per cent were economic immigrants, including principal

applicants, spouses, and dependents. These economic immigrants were most commonly occupied as university professors and post-secondary assistants and civil, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineers.

- Between 2011 and 2015, 101 citizens of Bangladesh had Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) work permits come into effect for Alberta. These workers were most commonly occupied as food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations and chefs and cooks.

## AGRICULTURE

- Bangladesh is Alberta's 7th largest agri-food market with exports averaging \$124 million between 2012 and 2015.
- In 2015, Alberta exports to Bangladesh included wheat (\$115 million), canola seed (\$18.8 million) and dried peas (\$5.9 million).
- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry paid an advocacy visit to Bangladesh in November 2014 to promote Alberta's agricultural sector and to explore potential agricultural trade opportunities.

## FORESTRY

- Since 2011, Alberta exports of chemical wood pulp to Bangladesh has averaged \$1.4 million.
- Sawmills are the principal wood user and furniture making has the highest number of establishments, estimated at over 34,000.
- Forestry timber exports are expected to increase to meet the demand of local private entrepreneurs.

## EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

- Bangladesh has made progress on economic reform, which could mean more opportunities for Alberta companies.

## RECENT VISITS

- February 2016: His Excellency Kamrul Ahsan, High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh, came to Edmonton for an official visit.
- October 2008: His Excellency A.M. Yakub Ali, High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh, visited Alberta.
- July 2004: Bangladeshi diplomats visited Calgary during the Stampede.

## DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

- His Excellency Mizanur Rahman is the High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh's High Commission in Ottawa.
- The High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh based in Dhaka is His Excellency Benoît-Pierre Laramée.