

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

### Political Overview

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) along with a 4 party alliance heads the present government. Begum Khaleda Zia is the head of BNP and the current Prime Minister. The main opposition is the Awami League headed by Sheikh Hasina.

### Economic Overview

According to a World Bank Report- Bangladesh has come a long way since independence nearly 30 years ago. Per capita income has grown from \$ 100 to \$350 and social indicators have improved. Bangladesh has recorded outstanding progress in education. Enrolments cover 90% of the primary school age group, 44% at lower secondary and 27% at secondary. Almost as many girls as boys are enrolled in primary and lower secondary as a result of a very active policy by the Government of Bangladesh.

Growth of the Bangladeshi economy in 2000-2001 is 6.0% compared to the 5.2% in 1999-2000. The inflation rate is around 2.3%. In the last 30 years, Bangladesh has succeeded in establishing: a hi-tech garment industry; a micro-credit system to alleviate poverty; and the largest Non Government Organisation in the world.

### Cultural Overview

#### Place of women:

In Bangladesh primary and secondary school teachers and administrators are mostly female.

Children are taught to respect their teachers so male students should not have problem with female educators.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh is a woman as is the Opposition Leader. Any difficulties are more likely due to factors other than gender.

#### Personal responsibility/ group responsibility:

Students are encouraged to work individually, as well as in a group. This way, they learn to be responsible for their own work and, at the same time, able to work in a team.

#### Asking for favours:

The child (girl/boy) coming from urban well-to-do families are well looked after by their parents. Sometimes it may look to be somewhat 'over-protective'. They are used to asking for and receiving favours. It is endemic to ask for special attention. Bangladesh society operates on the basis of personal networks. University students do not have to work during the summer to earn for their tuition/ living. Generally they live with their parents (who bear all their expenses) and are looked after by household staff until they complete their studies and find a job.

In a new environment, they may become homesick and feel a bit lost. Consequently, they may ask for help/suggestions. Our recommendation would be that you encourage them to be more self reliant. It is best to give clear **guide lines** about rules, do's/ don'ts, deadlines and expectations of the university.

Information about Bangladesh is available on the web sites : [www.bangla2000.com](http://www.bangla2000.com)  
[www.virtualbangladesh.com](http://www.virtualbangladesh.com)