



**45th Session
of the
Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)**



45th
SESSION
OF THE OIC COUNCIL
OF FOREIGN
MINISTERS
D H A K A 2 0 1 8

**of the
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**

Administrative Arrangements

Dhaka, Bangladesh

05-06 May, 2018

This document is as of 18 February 2018. Any updates made to the administrative arrangements, will be available from time to time on the website: www.dhakacfm.com

45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

INTRODUCTION:

The 45th Session of the OIC-CFM with the theme of “Islamic Values for Sustainable Peace, Solidarity and Development” will be held on 05-06 May 2018 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This is the second time that Bangladesh is hosting a CFM after holding the first in 1983. With the 45th CFM in Dhaka chairmanship of the CFM will pass from incumbent Cote d’Ivoire to Bangladesh for the next one year until the holding of the 46th CFM.

The 45th Session of the CFM will open with an inaugural ceremony in the first half of 5 May 2018 and end with a closing session preceded by a sideline event/brainstorming session under the title –“The Humanitarian Challenges in the OIC Member States with a Special Focus on the Humanitarian Situation on the Rohingyas” on 6 May 2018. OIC Contact Group on Myanmar is scheduled to visit the Rohingyas in camps in Cox’s Bazar on 4 May 2018.

During the Session the meetings of the Special Committee, various OIC Ministerial Contact Groups, and elections including those of the Assistant Secretaries General (ASG) of OIC will be held in parallel at the same venue.

The logistical arrangements for the conference and meetings are being undertaken by the Coordination Office under the CFM Organising Committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

This document of Administrative Arrangements provides initial logistical and administrative information and arrangements in order to assist delegations/representatives prepare for participation at the 45th Session of the OIC CFM. Updates will be issued as may be required. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh wishes all delegates most productive deliberations and a memorable visit to Dhaka.

PARTICIPATION:

The participation of the delegations to the CFM Conference will be as follows:

- Inaugural Session of the 45th Session of the CFM - 05 May 2018 (morning)
- Special Committee Meetings - 05 May 2018
- Sessions of the 45th CFM - 05 and 06 May 2018
- Sideline/Brainstorming Event - 06 May 2018 (morning)
- Elections - 05 or 06 May 2018
- Closing Session of the CFM - 06 May 2018

- Various social events

Inauguration: H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has kindly consented to inaugurate the 45th CFM. All delegations, delegates, invitees and participants – are warmly welcomed to take part in the inauguration of the Dhaka CFM to be held in the morning of 05 May 2018.

REGISTRATION and ACCREDITATION:

Delegation Accreditation Officer (DAO):

Each delegation must nominate a DAO and inform the Conference Coordinator (CC) the name and contact details of the DAO. Contact details of the CC are given below:

Amb. A F M Gousal Azam Sarker
Director General (International Organisations)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka
E-mail: dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd
Ph. +8802-4711 9440/+8802-4711 9441

Note: The Conference Coordinator will have the responsibility of general coordination with the delegations and be in general supervision of the conference arrangements.

For registration and accreditation, the Assistant Conference Coordinator (ACC) can be contacted as follows:

Mr. Md. Kamruzzaman
Director (International Organisations)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka
E-mail: dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd
Phone: Ph. +8802-4711 9440/+8802-4711 9441

Delegates must be registered by their designated DAO through the registration forms.

DAOs will be in charge to forward registration forms of their delegates. It is important that delegates are registered and then apply for their travel visa, as necessary.

Registration Forms:

Registration forms are available at <http://dhakacfm.com>

Registration for participation at the 45th Session of the CFM will remain open until 15 April 2018 during which the delegations are advised to complete registration within the

stipulated time (filled in forms and necessary photos and documents to be sent to dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd).

Special Guests and Invitees invited by the host Government are also requested to register. Registration forms to each Member State, Observer States/Organisations, Envoys, and OIC Subsidiary, Specialised, Affiliated etc. organisations as well as external international and regional organizations will be sent through the OIC General Secretariat (also available at <http://dhakacfm.com> . DAO will forward the registration forms through their registered email addresses to dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd

All information on registration will be protected and available only to a limited number of responsible officials.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

For any logistical and administrative matters concerning the Conference, please contact: dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd

For press and media related matters, please contact: dhakacfm.media@mofa.gov.bd with a copy to dirmedia@mofa.gov.bd

Contacts at a glance for coordination for specific purposes:

Relevant officials have been given the responsibility of assisting the participants, in meeting their queries and helping finalise arrangements for specific purposes.

Accommodation: dhakacfm.accommodation@mofa.gov.bd

Media: dhakacfm.media@mofa.gov.bd

Protocol: In matters relating to special flights, flight clearance, arms and ammunition, communication equipments, etc.; dhakacfm.protocol@mofa.gov.bd

List of Designated Hotels:

Given at Annex-I.

MEETING VENUE:

The Conference will be held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC), Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Address: Bangabandhu International Conference Center, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207; biccbd.com

Official Website of Dhaka CFM: www.dhakacfm.com

ACCESS TO MEETINGS:

For security reasons, access to the venue compound will be strictly restricted. Guests/participants will not have access to mobile phones, laptops, cameras, handbags during the inauguration on the morning of 05 May 2018.

Participants are requested to carry their invitation cards and conference badges for entry to the Inaugural Ceremony on 05 May 2018 as entry without invitation cards will not be facilitated.

During the remaining period of the Conference, however, the delegates will be able to carry electronic devices and belongings but will need to pass through strict security check and screening.

Due to enforced security measures, no guest will be allowed to enter the conference hall/ meeting room without the duly issued Conference ID badge/invitation card.

All pins, badges and conference related IDs will be delivered to the DAO/delegations at the lobby of the concerned hotels. These IDs are non-transferable. All delegates are advised to wear their ID badges at all times during the meeting and while at the venue. In case of difficulty, the temporary office room of the CFM Organising Committee at the hotels may be contacted.

Lapel Pins for Heads of Delegation:

Lapel pins will be provided to all Heads of Delegation of the member states and selected dignitaries. The assigned Delegation Liaison Officer (DLO)/Delegation Host Officer (DHO) will distribute the lapel pins. In case of loss, alternative lapel pin will not be provided. It has to be worn for access to designated venues. Lapel pins are nontransferable.

Floater/Floating badges:

In addition to ID badges, meeting floaters will be required in order to enter the meeting rooms of the Conference. Floating coloured badges or special badges will ensure access to designated areas (VIP-Zones). Floating badges are valid upon presenting badges of the respective category only. These are issued to each delegation according to the established format.

Pins, Badges, and Floaters for the HoDs and delegation members will be distributed through the respective Delegation Liaison Officers (DLOs).

ACCOMODATION AND LOCAL HOSPITALITY:

Member States:

The Government of Bangladesh will provide complementary accommodation for each attending Foreign Minister and two accompanying members of the delegation for three nights (04, 05 and 06 May 2018). For members of the OIC Contact Group on Myanmar, accommodation coverage will be for 4 nights (nights of 03-06 May 2018). For the concerned period, 1 suite/ executive suite/ business room for the Head of Delegation plus 2 standard rooms for other two members of the delegation for the same period will be provided at the designated hotels listed in the relevant Annex.

For other members of delegation, the participants should make their own reservation in the designated hotels. As the hotels will remain booked on block basis by the host side, a country specific code will be provided to make reservation for those members. To ensure their stay in the same hotel as their Head of Delegation, the delegates should indicate their hotel preference in the registration form and confirm hotel booking as early as possible.

Observers/Organisations/Institutions/Envoys/Special Guests and Invitees:

The Government of Bangladesh will provide complimentary accommodation for each attending Observer/ Organisation/ Institution/ Envoy/ Special Guest or Invitee/ Member of International Organisation 1 standard room for the same period at the designated hotels.

Any additional charges such as extra nights of stay, room upgradation, meals and incidentals (including room minibar use, overseas phone calls, etc.) will remain outside the hospitality coverage for both hosted and non-hosted delegates and participants, which shall be covered by the users themselves or their delegations.

Room reservations for hosted and non-hosted delegates must be made by the respective delegations taking opportunity of the block booking by the host authorities. The delegations are requested to submit to the ACC the names and titles of those members of their delegations for whom accommodation will be provided by Government of Bangladesh for early confirmation of hotel accommodation. Accommodation will be provided at the designated hotels on a "first come, first served" basis.

MEETING FACILITIES AND SERVICES:

Conference Table:

Attendance at the CFM on 05-06 May 2018 on the main table is limited to the Heads of Delegation from the Member States/Special Guest States/the Secretary General/the Special Guests.

Seating arrangement of the member states will comprise of the Head of Delegation (HoD) + 4 members of the delegation in two rows of two behind the HoD.

Listening Space for the Conference:

A listening space with audio - visual facilities will be available in the open space of the BICC ground floor for registered delegates who wish to follow the proceedings of the open sessions.

VIP Delegate Holding Lounge:

A lounge for the VIP delegates will be available at the ground floor of the venue.

Bilateral Meeting Arrangements/Rooms:

A limited number of meeting rooms with varying seating capacities will be available for bilateral and other meetings. Therefore, bilateral meeting requests should be made before the conference starts. The request for bilateral meetings has to be made through the OIC General Secretariat. Onsite request for bilateral meetings may be made with the host authorities through dhakacfm.protocol@mofa.gov.bd and with the host Secretariat office at the venue. A prescribed form requesting for bilateral meetings should be filled in and sent to the above mentioned e-mail. The rooms/booths will be provided on a first come first served basis. A special desk will be assigned for fixing bilateral meetings. Each meeting should not exceed 30 minutes.

No interpreter assistance will be provided for bilateral meetings by the organisers.

Interpretation:

All OIC meeting proceedings will be conducted in the official languages of the OIC (English, Arabic and French) with interpretation services. Simultaneous translation will be provided in these languages.

Delegations whose Heads wish to speak in a language other than the ones stated above, must bring their official interpreters at their own costs. For this purpose, one common booth will be installed for use by rotation or during the turn of the speaker concerned. The names and contact details of these interpreters must be submitted to the CC/ACC at the earliest. Technical facilities for interpretation may be provided by the host side upon request, subject to technical capacity of the venue and arrangements.

DELEGATION LIAISON OFFICER (DLO)/DELEGATION HOST OFFICERS (DHO):

A Delegation Liaison Officer/Delegation Host Officer (DLO/DHO) will be appointed for the Head of Delegation of each attending State and International Organization. The designated DLO/DHO will be introduced to the Head of Delegation/ International Organization at the airport.

Representatives or Heads of Delegation of various organisations may be put in liaison with group based DLOs. Delegations and Representatives are requested to contact their respective DLOs on all administrative issues. Each delegation or representation should also select one member who is responsible for organizational issues.

During the Conference, the designated DLO/DHO will be the contact person for the delegation on logistical and administrative matters and will be available in person to assist delegations throughout their visit.

SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS:

The Government of Bangladesh will provide personal security for all attending Heads of Delegation/International Organizations/Institutions/Special Guests and Invitees. Through the period of the Conference, special security measures will be taken at the airport for the arrival and departure of VIP guests.

The necessary security measures will be taken at all times at the Conference venue, the designated hotels and other function venues and during movement/trips. Access to the Conference Zone will be restricted strictly to those who wear accreditation badges of relevant types with different access limits.

The list of the Security Personnel accompanying official delegations and information concerning the types and serial numbers of their fire arms, the amount of ammunition and the numbers, types and frequencies of the communication equipment should be transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with attention to the CC/ACC by Note Verbale no later than 22 April 2018. No firearm will be allowed inside the venue premises.

Delegates are asked to cooperate in security checks. At the entrance, all packages and personal belongings will be subject to security checks. The HoD will be exempted from security checks.

For security reasons, no baggage will be allowed inside the venue. For security officers, the same accreditation procedure as delegation members will apply. The officers should be listed on a separate note and sent to dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd

A separate **permit for weapons and radio equipment** is necessary. To obtain a permit for weapons and frequencies, a request note should be sent to dhakacfm.protocol@mofa.gov.bd with the following details:

- Type and serial number of the firearms
- Quantity of ammunition
- Additional security and special equipment
- Name of the person who will carry the firearm, date and place of birth, and passport number
- Date and time of arrival and departure
- Flight numbers for arrival and departure
- Radio transmitters (type of device, purpose. Frequency) SIC

Armed security officers must carry written permission with them at all times.

All delegations are requested to submit data on all types of radio transmitter devices (type of device, purpose, frequencies) that are used for protocol, media and other purposes.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES:

The Embassies or the sending Ministries must provide information concerning the arrival and departure of their country's members of delegation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh with attention to the CC/ACC by Note Verbale by 15 April 2018 at dhakacfm@mofa.gov.bd , indicating whether the delegation is travelling by private aircraft or a commercial flight. A copy of the Note should also be sent to the OIC General Secretariat. Applications for flight permissions of private aircraft must be submitted to the Protocol Wing of the host Ministry through the e-mail: dhakacfm.protocol@mofa.gov.bd with attention to the Chief of Protocol in due time by a separate Note Verbale. There are parking facilities at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), Dhaka for a limited number of private aircrafts which will be provided on a first come first served basis.

HSIA VIP lounge(s) will be used for the arrival and departure of the Heads of Delegation and the delegates. Delegates and participants not accompanying Heads of Delegations arriving at the HSIA will also be greeted by a welcoming team at the arrival/entry points or VIP lounge. They will be assisted with their passport control and luggage procedures with special counter facilities.

The delegates, for convenience, upon disembarkation from the aircraft should find the greeters and aides holding the signpost/placard/banner at the entry. The delegates are advised to fill in the disembarkation forms while in the flight to reduce immigration formalities and time.

Protocol Officials as well as conference aides will remain present at the airport to provide assistance in expediting immigration process as may be required by the participants. In case there is not enough time to inform change of arrival and departure schedule, the delegates are advised to take assistance of the officials and conference aides available at the airport.

Similar facilitation will be provided during departure of the delegates and participants.

SPECIAL FLIGHTS:

Upon landing at the HSIA, the greeting team will guide the delegation(s) to the VIP lounge. Each delegation should designate one person responsible for collecting passports of all the members. The passports will be handed over to the Bangladesh officials and assistants for further processing and will be returned to the delegation

upon completion of the immigration process. The delegate and participants are therefore, requested to fill up the disembarkation cards while in the aircraft.

TRANSPORTATION:

Hotel-airport transfer: Necessary transport support will remain in place for delegates' transfer or transportation between the airport and the hotel during their arrival and departure on the occasion of the Conference.

Shuttle service: Shuttle bus services will be available during reasonable hours of the Conference days between hotels and the Conference and programme venues.

Transport Distribution:

Member States:

A VIP sedan car with chauffeur will be placed at the disposal of each Foreign Minister for his/her movements from arrival in Dhaka until completion of the Conference and his/her departure. Security escort will also be provided. For rest of the members of each Foreign Minister's delegation, one vehicle will be allocated. Other Heads of Delegation will be allocated one sedan car only and, where necessary, one more vehicle without escort arrangements.

Other participants/guests/invitees/organisations and institutions:

Except for Government Ministers and the above as invited by the host country or OIC General Secretariat, only one sedan car will be allocated to each such delegation.

Delegates, participants and invitees not accommodated within the two sedan cars provided may avail the shuttle services from airport to their hotels upon arrival, from hotels to the Bangabandhu Conference Centre (BICC) and from hotels to the airport during their departure from Dhaka.

Duration of transport services:

The vehicles will be provided for the duration of the visit, including arrival and departure within the hospitality limit which is generally from 4 to 7 May 2018. For those attending the OIC Contact Group Meeting on Myanmar the duration will start from 3 May.

MEDIA ARRANGEMENTS:

Media Accreditation:

Applications for media accreditation, including official photographers and cameramen' must be made well ahead at dhakacfm.media@mofa.gov.bd with copy to dirmedia@mofa.gov.bd

Applications must be submitted online no later than 15 April 2018. Representatives of foreign mass media should send the following by this date:

- a. Completed accreditation form
- b. One colour photo (passport size)with the applicant's names. Photos should be front faced without any hat etc. on the head
- c. Scanned copy of their passport
- d. Citizens of those countries requiring visa to visit Bangladesh should inform the above on their planned period of stay in Dhaka well ahead of time.

A confirmation e-mail for successfully completed accreditations will be sent to the applicants.

Only accredited media representatives will be allowed access to the designated meetings and the media center at the BICC. Access for media representatives to official events and to the media centre will only be granted if the relevant photo badges and identity documents are presented.

Applications of media personnel must reach the External Publicity Wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the e-mail: dhakacfm.media@mofa.gov.bd. Government News Agencies and Bangladesh TV and Radio Bangladesh are the official broadcasters and host photographers.

All queries on media matters may be directed to the e-mail address mentioned above.

ENTRY TO BANGLADESH AND VISA

It is mandatory to obtain visa for Bangladesh. In order to find out whether a visa is required for Bangladesh, please visit www.immi.gov.bd To download the visa application form, please visit the website of Bangladesh Embassy/Consulate in your country of residence or country nearby yours.

If the participant is from a country where Bangladesh does not have a resident Mission, visa on arrival will be arranged upon prior information (ten days before travel) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focal point at dhakacfm.protocol@mofa.gov.bd

A valid passport with prior visa is generally required to enter Bangladesh. Visa on arrival or entry pass may be allowed for some foreign nationals as indicated above.

SECRETARIAT/OFFICE ROOM OF THE ORGANISERS:

Venue: OIC General Secretariat will be given an office in the first floor of the BICC and the ASGs will be provided arrangements close by the Secretariat office at the venue.

Conference host and organisers' temporary secretariat and office facilities of the hosting dignitaries and officials will be arranged at BICC.

Delegation Communication Room: A separate room will be equipped with computers, printers and photocopiers with related facilities at the ground floor of the BICC for use by the delegations. Arrangements in three languages will be available.

Copies of Statement etc.: In order to facilitate distribution of the statements and presentations during the meeting, the participants may e-mail electronic/soft copies of their presentations to the Office of the General Secretariat at the venue for distribution.

Duration of statement: Speaking slot for each member state will be limited to 5 minutes. Member states are requested to prepare their country statements accordingly.

Hotel: A room of the hotel used for conference related accommodation of delegates will be designated as the office room of the host i.e. Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the entire period of the Conference where conference related information will be rendered.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Mobile /Cellular SIM connection:

In order to avail mobile phone connection locally, the delegates may purchase a mobile SIM card/ connection upon arrival from any telecom operator's booth available at HSIA airport. One SIM card will be provided on complimentary basis to each delegation.

Climate:

Dhaka, located in the zone of the Tropic of Cancer, is humid. April-May is summer in Bangladesh with occasional, short-lived storms and showers. Temperature in the first week of May is on average 30 degrees Celsius. Average humidity is 75%. Further details about Dhaka weather forecast is available at: <http://www.bmd.gov.bd/>.

Prayer Times:

For detailed information, please visit: <https://www.islamicfinder.org/world/bangladesh/>
Fajr: 0413 hrs (Iqamah 0500 hrs); Zuhr: 1251 (Iqamah 1330 hrs); Asr: 1749 hrs (Iqamah 1800 hrs); Maghrib 1956 hrs; Isha: 2125 hrs; Jumuah 1330 hrs.

Time zone of Dhaka is UTC/GMT +6 hrs.

International dialing codes:

The country code for Bangladesh is 880. The area codes for Dhaka is 2. To make an international phone call from Bangladesh, one should dial 00+country code+ the phone number. For Bangladesh: 00-880-2—landline number; 00-880-1---mobile number.

Electricity supply:

Electrical sockets (outlets) in Bangladesh usually supply electricity at between 220 and 240 volts AC.

For the most part, electrical sockets (outlets) are one of three types: The "Type C" European CEE 7/16 Euro plug, the "Type G" British BS-1363 or the "Type D" Indian 5 amp BS-546.



Phone charging:

There will be complimentary mobile phone charging stations at different locations in the venue where delegates may charge their cell phones. All would, however, be advised not to leave respective phones unattended.

Laptop charging facility:

Laptop charging facility with three-pin socket extension cords may be available in most of the hotels in Dhaka as well as at the venue.

Currency, Banking, Credit Cards and ATMs:

The official currency in Bangladesh is Bangladesh Taka (TK) available in the following denominations: banknotes: Tk. 5,10,20,50,100, 500 and 1000; coins: Tk. 1, 2, 5 and 10. International credit cards are accepted in most hotels, restaurants and shopping centers.

Cash can usually be exchanged at Exchange Offices. ATM facilities are usually available in the bank branches or in different city points and streets. As of February 2018, the exchange rate of USD 1 is Taka 79.50 and Euro 1 is Taka 99.20.

For daily exchange rates, please visit the website of the Bangladesh Bank, the Central Bank of Bangladesh internet or the daily newspapers. Banking hours are generally from 1000 to 1800 hrs from Monday to Friday (with lunch break for an hour 1300-1400 hrs. and transaction closing at 1600 hrs.). Cash machines (ATMs) are available throughout Bangladesh, accepting major credit/bank cards and instructions are available in English and local Bengali language.

Arrangements are being made for installing a temporary money exchange booth at the Conference venue.

Food: Bangladesh cuisine is generally South Asian. Larger Hotels and specialised restaurants also provide international cuisines.

Dress: For conference and meeting purposes lounge suits, national dress, formal wear are necessary. Smart casual wear are recommended for private use for comfort. Tour does not require a formal dress.

Prayer Room/Space is available at the Conference venue at its ground level.

Business Hours for Offices and Shops: Commercial markets in Dhaka are open Monday to Saturday from 0900-2200 hrs. Shops offer a variety of goods, including specialised local arts and crafts. Office hours for the government are Sunday to Thursday, 0900-1700 hrs.

In case of emergency, Hotel Concierge and DLO/DHO may please be contacted.

Important telephone numbers in Dhaka:

- Police: 999
- Police (RAB): (+88-02) 8963419, 8963420
- Fire service: (+88-02) 9555555, 9556666
- Ambulance: (+88-02) 9330188, 9330189

Medical services: A healthcare staff will be available around the clock at the Conference Venue. Ambulance service and local hospitals will be fully prepared to address emergency needs. Arrangements have been with four hospitals in the city for emergency admission and medical care. Expenses for hospitalization and treatment is necessitated will be borne by the delegate requiring emergency medical services. In case of sudden ailment/illness hotel reception may contacted for help. Host Organising Committee Office in the hotel may also be contacted for help.

Pharmacies are open from 0090-2000 hrs. However, pharmacies at particular points of the city e.g. at Shahbagh near the Bangabandhu Post Graduate University Hospital, Gulshan 2 round about are open 24 hours. Pharmacies are easily recognizable with their cross or crescent signs.

Wireless internet: Wifi for internet will be available at hotels and Conference Venues.

A brief glimpse into Bangladesh - Land, People and Society:

Officially Bangladesh is named as “The People’s Republic of Bangladesh”. It is situated at the deltaic confluence of one of the most **active river systems** of the world namely, Ganges – Brahmaputra – Meghna river basins. Bangladesh enjoys a strategic

position - in between South Asia and South-East Asia - having border with India and Myanmar. To the South, lies the Bay of Bengal. It is one of the active-most and largest deltas of the world, with a total area of 147,570 Sq. Kms and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ of waters) of around 115,000 Sq. Kms.

Bangladesh is the third largest OIC country in terms of its Muslim population. It is a unitary parliamentary democracy. Moderation is the mark of its people and interfaith harmony is its century old tradition. For decades, Bangladesh society and people have been acclaimed globally for its secular outlook, liberal society, religious and political values. The society is diverse yet harmonious. Of the 160 million people, the majority (88%) are Muslims; and the minorities consist of Hindus, Christians and Buddhists.

The official language - **Bangla** (or, Bengali) has its roots in Sanskrit. Dated even before the birth of Christ, Bangla was widely spoken in the deltaic region and now spoken by nearly 300 million people all over the world. Bangladesh's rich and diverse culture is reflected in its architecture, culture, fine and performing arts (literature, music, painting, etc.), clothing, discourse, etc. While Bangladesh has a sizable population globally exposed and placed, and an urban youth with a growing knack for contemporary globalized music, people at large hold a committed appreciation for folk tunes and lyrics that embody the depth and variety of Bangladeshi culture. This includes the cultural traditions and products brought by the ethnic minorities. A living cultural tradition is clothing which is embodied in different kinds of skillfully produced products like sarees – the primary clothing for Bangladeshi women.

The land and language are famous for its **rich and great cultural heritage and strength**. Literature, music, dance, art, paintings, festivals, and creative expressions of the people of Bangladesh have left a mark of great refinement, quality and beauty and are acclaimed world over. Mahatma Gandhi once said, 'If I have to listen to good music I have to go to Bengal.'

English is widely spoken and understood, especially in urban areas.

Bangladesh currently has three **international airports**: Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. The country is covered with a network of rivers and canals forming a maze of inter-connecting channels.

The **major crops** are rice, jute, wheat, maize, tea, tobacco, sugarcane, pulses, oil seeds, cotton, spices, potatoes, vegetables, and a host of luscious fruits (banana, mango, lichi, jackfruit, coconut, etc.). The **key natural resources** include natural gas, coal, lime, white clay, granite, glass sand, forestry. **Principal industries** are jute, cotton, textile, garments, tea, sugar, leather, pharmaceuticals, ship-building, porcelain and ceramics, furniture and wood products, etc. **Principal imports** are manufactured goods, machineries, transports, petroleum products, chemicals, edible oils, beverages, etc. **Principal exports** include readymade garments (2nd largest after China), frozen foods (shrimps), leather, leather products, jute, jute products, tea, ceramic, textile

fabrics, home textiles, chemical product, light engineering products including bicycles, pharmaceuticals, small and medium size ocean going ships and vessels, etc.

Bangladeshi society is known for its hospitality. Its **cuisine** is rich and varied with diverse tastes. The range covers Central Asian to South Asian and to some extent South East Asian gastronomic combinations. The cuisine has all four principal bases – vegetables, fish, meat, and dairy.

Dhaka (formerly *Dacca*), **the capital** and largest city of Bangladesh, is located in the geographic center of the country. Situated in one of the world's leading rice- and jute-growing regions, Dhaka once used to be regarded as a city dotted with mosques. The Muslim influence is reflected in over 700 mosques and historic/heritage buildings throughout the city. Dhaka is divided into the old city and the new city. The city with its outskirts was founded during the 10th century. It served as the Moghul capital of Bengal (1608-1704) and was a trading center for the British, French and Dutch interests before coming under British rule (in 1765). In 1905, it was again named the capital of Bengal and in 1956, it became the capital of East Pakistan. The city suffered heavy damage during the Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971. It has grown into a sprawling city of around 16 million people with its festivities, sports, entertainments, commercial centres, activities and events, national and international.

Bangladesh is a growing tourist destination in the region. The country offers a lot to see, visit, study and enjoy in terms of its natural and historic sites, relics, monuments, attractions, food, festivals and of course the warmth and friendliness of its people.

Places of interest in Dhaka:

National Parliament House, Bangladesh National Museum, Liberation War Museum, Ahsan Manzil (Palace of the rulers of old Dhaka), Dhakeshwari Temple, Lalbagh Fort (Mughal time fort), old town, Shahid Minar (national memorial), cruise on the river Buriganga, etc.

Places of Interest in Bangladesh

One of the world's longest unbroken sandy beaches in Cox's Bazar district, Saint Martin Coral Island, one of the world's biggest and natural mangrove forest - The Sundarbans in Khulna district for river and sea safari, Rangamati and Khagrachhari hilly districts with lakes and tribal ecotourism attractions, tea estates in Sylhet district with mesmerising scenic beauty and quiet, haors or marshlands in greater Sylhet region with ecotourism and boat cruise facilities, Kuakata in the southern coast for viewing the sun rise and sunset from the beach, Sonargaon-the Panam City in Dhaka district etc.

For further details about the places of interest in Bangladesh, the following links may be visited:

- <http://visitbangladesh.gov.bd/> and
- <http://tourismboard.gov.bd/>.

ANNEX-I

DESIGNATED HOTELS

HOTEL (5 stars) CONTACT PERSONS:

1. Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon, 107, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka; +880-2-9128008; Mr. Fariaz Morshed Chowdhury, Assistant Director of Sales & Marketing; fmchowdhury@panpacific.com; +880-1755 605891
2. Hotel Radisson Blu; Airport Road, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka; +880-2-9834555; Mr. Rezaur Rahman, Senior Sales Executive; +880-171303 8558; rrahman@radisson.com; Mr. Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Sales Executive; +880-1713038557
3. Hotel Le Meridien; 79/A Commercial Area, Airport Road, Nikunja 2, Khilkhet, Dhaka; +880-2-+880-2-8900089; Mr. Saiful Alam, Business development Manager; Md.Alam@lemeridien.com ; +880-17666 73411;
4. Hotel Sarina; Plot No. 27, Road No. 17, Banani C/A, Banani, Dhaka; +880-2-982111/9821122; Mr. Dipak Paul, General Manager; gm@sarinahotel.com; +880-2-9821122; Ms. Samina Rupa, Guest Service Executive; +880-1730020342; guestservice@sarinahotel.com
5. Hotel Regency +880-2-+880-2-8913912; Mr. Md. Yeeaqub Ali, Assistant Sales Manager; yeeaqub@dhakaregency.com; +880-171333 2566

4 Star Hotels:

1. Hotel Best Western Plus Maple Leaf, Plot 1B, Road 1, Sector 1, Uttara, Dhaka+880-2-7914855; Mr. Rintu Saha, Executive, Sales & Reservation; +880-196666 7686
2. Hotel Best Western La Vinci, 54 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215 +880-2-9119352; Mr. Tapas Ghosh, General Manager; +880-171211 3907