

9 in 10 children suffer

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

	2012-13 (%)	2019 (%)
Corporal punishment and psychological abuse of 1 to 14 year olds	82.3	88.8
First married before 18 (now 20-24 years old)	52.3	51.4
Child deliveries via caesarean section	19.1	36.4
Child deliveries in medical institutions	31	53.4
Women satisfied with modern contraception methods	81.7	77.4
Children under 5 who have books	8.8	6.1
Early Child Bearing (before age 18)	24.4	24.2
Under-five child mortality rate	58	40
Literacy rate (15 to 24 years old)	82	88.7
Exposure to mass media (15 to 49 years old)	1.6	.5
Ownership of Mobile Phone (15 to 49 years old)	na	71.4
Use of Mobile Phone (15 to 49 years old)	na	97.8
Use of internet (15 to 49 years old)	na	12.9
Infant mortality rate	46	34
Spousal age difference (10 or more years older)	20.4	30.8
Safety (feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark)	na	74.8

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Over 25 percent of the women aged 15-49 years said their spouses had justification in beating them if they went out without telling them, burnt the food, argued with them, failed to take care of the children, and refused to have sex.

The net attendance rate in primary school stands at 85.9 percent, somewhat higher compared to the previous MICS round where it was 73.2 percent. Nevertheless, 13.1 percent adolescents are out of lower secondary school. The drop-out rate is particularly high among boys. One in five (18.1 percent) children is out of lower secondary education.

The literacy rate of women increased to 88.7 percent from 82 percent previously but sadly, exposure to mass media has decreased. Only 0.5 percent women read a newspaper or magazine, listen to the radio, or watch television at least once a week; this figure was 1.6 percent in 2012-13.

Ownership and use of technology has increased over the past years as currently 71.4 percent of women aged 15-49 years own a mobile phone, and 97.8 percent had used a mobile phone in the three months prior to the survey. However, only 12.9 percent of women used the internet.

One of the most positive developments was a sharp decline in chronic malnutrition as measured by stunting levels, which fell from 42 percent in 2012-2013 to 28 percent in 2019.

All child mortality rates (neonatal, post-neonatal, infant, and under-five) have had a downward trend in Bangladesh over the last 30 years, according to the survey.

Other welcome findings include an increase in the availability of drinking water, better access to and use of toilets, an increase in the net attendance of children in primary and secondary schools, and an increase in birth registration.

However, more needs to be done quickly if Bangladesh is to achieve its ambitious UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Saurendra Nath Chakrabarty, secretary of the Statistics and Informatics Division, said, "The new set of data available from this round of MICS continues to promote a data-driven public discourse and policy making for the betterment of children in Bangladesh as a middle-income country."

Alain Balandi Domsam, Officer-in-Charge Representative, Unicef Bangladesh, said, "The findings of MICS 2019 will help us identify those who are left behind in the country's development process so that we can take action and reach the children whose needs are the greatest."

It is critical to break gender stereotypes and transform social norms that perpetuate gender inequality, he said, adding, "Bangladesh cannot wait to invest in its children and youth if it is to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend. The country has only 11 years to go before this unique window of opportunity closes. It is essential to increase investment to strengthen systems and to build structures and capacities to accelerate the SDGs in Bangladesh."

At the end of last year, legal and human rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) also revealed that the rate of violence against children has increased alarmingly, as has the multidimensionality of the violence committed.

Nina Goswami, senior deputy director of ASK, said since it is linked with women's issues, incidents of violence against children do not receive sufficient attention. "If there is a separate commission or directorial, it will be helpful to rethink what more we should be doing to ensure the protection of children," she said.

Govt mulling Tk 2 lakh

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the liquidation of a bank despite the fact that the person deposited more than the insured amount.

The ministry arranged a meeting with officials of Bangladesh Bank and other banks on Sunday and the meeting decided to increase the ceiling, said ministry and central bank officials who took part in it.

The rest of the deposits, which is not insured, will be paid back by selling the assets of the liquidated bank as per the Banking Companies Act 1991, they said. The ministry may upload the revised draft act on its website within a day or two, one of its officials said.

But this initiative would not boost depositors' confidence in the banking sector given its vulnerable situation, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, while speaking to this correspondent on the matter.

"Increasing the insured ceiling for deposits is not a solution. The government and the central bank should take measures to improve corporate governance in the banking sector," he said.

By increasing the ceiling, there is no scope of giving protection to majority of the deposits, he added.

Currently, banks have to pay premium at the rate ranging from 0.08

to 0.10 percent on their outstanding amount of deposits to insure deposits.

The volume of Deposit Insurance Trust Fund (DITF) reached Tk 7,430 crore in December 2018, up 16.03 percent from a year ago.

The total accounts and deposits in the banking sector stood at 10.28 crore and Tk 11,59,288 crore respectively as of September last year.

Ninety percent of the total accountholders with maximum balance of Tk 1 lakh are insured under the deposit safety net, a Bangladesh Bank official said.

The ratio of accounts will increase to 95-96 percent when the government will double the ceiling of the insured deposit amount, he said.

Mansur said that a good number of accounts that hold deposits up to Tk 1 lakh were not active.

The clients, who have deposited higher amount of funds, were now facing a worrisome situation because of the "existing haphazard situation" in the banking sector.

The central bank should increase the insurance premium for banks to protect depositors, said Salehuddin Ahmed, a former governor of the BB.

The government should consider the premium rate followed by the neighbouring countries and developed ones before fixing the ceiling, he added.

Red Cross gets sanctions exemption for N Korea virus aid

AFP, Geneva

The Red Cross said yesterday it had obtained an exemption to United Nations sanctions against North Korea to provide testing kits and medical equipment against a possible coronavirus outbreak.

"The potential for an outbreak of COVID-19 in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a threat to millions of people who are already in need of humanitarian assistance," the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said in a statement.

IFRC's Asia Pacific chief Xavier Castellanos was quoted as saying that the sanctions exemption was "a life-saving intervention and an important

measure to ensure that sanctions do not bear a negative impact on the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

"We know that there is urgent need of personal protective gear and testing kits, items vital to prepare for a possible outbreak," he said in the statement.

The exemption was granted by the United Nations Sanctions Committee after the US said last week that it would look positively at requests for sending assistance.

Analysts say North Korea's self-imposed isolation in the face of the coronavirus epidemic raging in neighbouring China is its only method of protection from an outbreak that would wreak havoc given its crumbling health system.



President Abdul Hamid cutting a cake at a programme organised marking the passing-out parade of the 94th recruit batch of Border Guard Bangladesh at Bir Uttam Mujibur Rahman Parade Ground in Chattogram yesterday. PHOTO: PTD

BGB to observe Martyrs' Day today

BSS, Dhaka

Border Guard Bangladesh will observe the Martyrs' Day today with due solemnity, commemorating the army officers killed in the Pilkhona BDR carnage in 2009.

Marking the day, the BGB will organise Quran Khwani, doa and milad mahfil in all its offices, including the Pilkhona headquarters, said a BGB press release yesterday.

Representatives of the president and the prime minister, the home minister,

chiefs of three armed forces, and BGB director general, among others, will place wreaths at the Banani military graveyard around 9:00am.

All BGB members will wear black badges, and BGB flag will be hoisted at half-mast at the places where BGB regimental flag is hoisted.

A special prayer and milad mahfil will be held at Pilkhona central mosque at 4:25pm tomorrow seeking salvation of the departed souls of the Pilkhona tragedy martyrs.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan will be present at the milad mahfil as the chief guest. Home ministry senior secretary, BGB director general, relatives of the martyrs, and all officers of the BGB headquarters will attend the programme.

On February 25-26, 2009, a disgruntled group of the then Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) killed 74 people, including 57 army officers, of the paramilitary force at the Pilkhona headquarters.

DU opts out

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At the same meeting, the council decided that the university will continue to enrol students through its own method of admission tests, said several professors who attended the meeting.

The uniform admission test has been rejected to protect the university's "uniqueness", Abul Mansur Ahmed, professor of mass communication and member of the DU senate, told reporters during a break in the meeting.

"Dhaka University has its own heritage and it's unique... The decision of not adopting the uniform admission test was taken unanimously," he said.

After deciding about the admission tests, the professors started discussing whether to stop enrolment in the evening courses.

A committee consisting of five deans on February 9 recommended stopping enrolment of students in the evening courses until a guideline was in place.

It was a closed-door meeting, but the microphones and speakers at the senate were left on for nearly an hour, allowing reporters outside to hear what was being said inside. About 15 professors were heard saying that they were against stopping enrolment in the evening courses. Only two professors said the committee's recommendations to shut down the courses should be implemented.

Most of the academicians said the university earned a lot from the tuition fees paid by the students of evening courses and sometimes the evening courses brightened DU's image.

Prof Kamal Uddin of the business faculty said that the university earned Tk 50 crore a year from the courses and if the courses shut down, the university will be deprived.

Prof Tofail Ahmed Chowdhury, dean of science faculty and convener of the evaluation committee that submitted its report earlier this month, addressed the meeting, saying why the evening courses should stop until the guidelines were made.

Prof Tofail later told reporters that as he spoke, many of the professors shouted "shame, shame". Expressing his support for the evening courses, physics Professor ABM Obaidul Islam, also convener of the BNP-backed senate panel, said some courses could be reformed if need be, but shutting down would not be wise.

Criminology professor and senate member Zia Rahman said, "Those evening courses brighten the image of the university indirectly." He questioned the "seriousness" of the evaluation committee's report.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi University at its academic council meeting chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof M Abdus Sobhan also rejected the uniform admission test.

Emerging from the meeting, the VC told journalists that the uniform admission test posed risks of question paper leaks, and ensuring standards would be difficult in uniform test.

"We take pride in the fact that there was never an instance of question paper leak in our admission tests. Also, the standard which we maintain while organising the admission tests... we are not sure if the uniform test will ensure that. Therefore, the academic council has decided not to adopt uniform admission tests," he said.

University Grants Commission earlier decided that a uniform admission test would be held at all public universities.

India, US united in fighting terror

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"India and US have natural and enduring friendship," Trump said to a cheering crowd.

"We are quickly revitalising our alliances all around world," he said.

Trump said both countries are working on a "fantastic trade" deal, and observed that Modi is a "tough negotiator".

The US president also heaped praises on Modi, saying the Prime Minister is a "living proof" of what an Indian can achieve with hard work as Trump referred to his humble background as a tea-seller, who had a landslide win in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

On his part, Modi welcomed Trump to "world's largest democracy" and said a "new history" was being created. Modi also praised Trump's leadership in containing terrorism.

Trump said as the world's largest economy, India gives hope to all humanity and has become an economic giant.

"There is a difference between a nation that rises by coercion and one that rises by setting its people free -- that is India. India and the US have natural and enduring friendship," he said.

He also touched on India's cultural diversity and riches as he highlighted the success of its blockbuster movies like DDLJ (Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge) and Sholay, and its sporting icons like Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli.

He highlighted the boom in the US economy under his presidency and added that India will soon be home to the biggest middle class as it will eliminate extreme poverty in the next

10 years.

On his part, Modi said ties between India and the US are no longer just another partnership but have touched far greater heights.

Welcoming Trump, he said a "new history" is being created.

Visit of President Trump to India

with his family shows strong ties between India and the US, said Modi.

Later yesterday, Trump and Melania -- dressed in an off-white jump suit and Indian sash alongside her husband in his usual suit and tie -- flew to the Taj Mahal for sunset before the main official talks today.

Mushfiqur

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declared the first innings after posting a huge total of 560 for six and followed it up with Nayeem Hasan's double blow in the dying hours of the day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Zimbabwe still require another 287 runs with eight wickets in hand to avoid an innings defeat. Veteran batsman Brendon Taylor and Kevin Kasuza will resume the fourth day with the score on nine for two. However, there are concerns over the weather as rain is forecast for the next couple of days in the capital.

Mushfiqur remained unbeaten on 203 off 318 balls, which included 28 fours. His third double-hundred also saw him surpass Tamim Iqbal as Bangladesh's highest run-scorer in Tests.

Skipper Mominul Haque also registered his ninth Test hundred after scoring 132 runs and the cricketer kept his promise to score a big knock which he had announced ahead of the Test match.

Resuming the third day on 240 for 3 with Mominul and Mushfiqur well set at the crease, it was expected that the duo would take Bangladesh to a better position on a pitch that was sporting for the third straight day.

Both Mushfiqur and Mominul cashed in right from the start and added 111 runs in 28 overs in the first session.

Mominul reached his hundred off 156 balls and equalled Tamim's tally of nine hundreds in Test cricket, the highest for Bangladesh. Mushfiqur batted in compact fashion and went to lunch just one shy of his seventh hundred, which he registered off 180 balls just after the break.

The pair, who had a great time together at the crease in the past, added their third double-hundred partnerships in Tests for the Tigers, also the most for the country. The 222-run fourth-wicket stand however ended when Mominul was dismissed for 132 off 234 balls, which featured 14 fours, after a sharp return catch by Ainsley Ndlovu.

Mohammad Mithun was unable to stay long and departed cheaply but Liton Das scored fifty and added another hundred with Mushfiqur. Liton however was dismissed after reaching his fifty, victim of another brilliant catch, this time by keeper Regis Chakabva, his fifth dismissal in the innings.

Mushfiqur then paired with Taijul Islam and reached his second double-hundred against Zimbabwe with a single and celebrated the feat in style with an emphatic celebration, which he later dedicated to his only son.

The home side managed to utilise the opportunity after asking Zimbabwe to bat in the dying hours of the day as off-spinner Nayeem bowled opener Prince Masvare in the first over of the innings.

The youngster picked up his second wicket in the very next ball when he dismissed nightwatchman Donald Tiripano and was on a hat-trick before Taylor negotiated it carefully.

Bad light had forced the floodlights to come on even before the Zimbabwean innings, at which point Zimbabwe coach Lalchand Rajput was seen talking to the fourth umpire in the dug-out.

Malaysia PM

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oust a corruption-plagued government at the 2018 polls.

Mahathir, who previously served as premier from 1981 to 2003, had made a pre-election pledge to hand power to Anwar but has repeatedly refused to fix a date.

With the ruling coalition's fate still uncertain yesterday morning, Mahathir's office made the surprise announcement that he had "sent a resignation letter as prime minister of Malaysia" to the king at 1:00 pm (0500 GMT). No reason was given.

Shortly before, Mahathir's Bersatu party announced it was leaving the ruling coalition and 11 lawmakers resigned from Anwar's party, leaving the Pact of Hope in tatters and fuelling suggestions efforts could be underway to form a new alliance.

Despite speculation Mahathir -- a wily political operator known for authoritarian tendencies during his first stint in power -- was leading the push for a new coalition, Anwar insisted this was not true.

Anwar said Mahathir had assured him yesterday that "he played no part in it", adding he was "very clear that in no way will he ever work with those associated with the past regime".

According to local media, the new coalition would have included the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the party of disgraced ex-leader Najib Razak, which was ejected from power in 2018.

BID TO TOPPLE GOVT
Lim Guan Eng -- a senior member of the Democratic Action Party, which formed part of the "Pact of Hope" -- said that Mahathir told him that he was resigning in protest at the "nefarious attempt" to topple the government.

"Mahathir clearly stated that he cannot work with UMNO when we worked so hard to reject UMNO successfully in the 2018 general elections," he said.

Both Anwar and Mahathir had audiences with the king yesterday, although their intentions were unclear. While his role is largely ceremonial, the monarch appoints the country's prime minister, who must show he commands the support of a majority of MPs.

Many Malaysians were angry at the prospect of the democratically elected government being replaced without an election.

The people "will not agree to or cooperate with any 'backdoor' government formed out of the selfish, self-preservation agenda of certain MPs", said a statement from a group of leading activists and academics.

"To my great friend Prime Minister Modi - Thank you for this wonderful visit."



Trump wrote in visitor's book at Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad yesterday

"I am filled with hope and inspiration as I have the privilege to view this testament to Gandhi's life. He is a hero not just to India but to the world."



Obama wrote in visitor's book at Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram in 2010