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E-Governance and Bangladesh

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Electronic-governance (e-governance in short) involves the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its numerous applications by the government for the provision of information and e-services (that is services by electronic means) to the citizens of the country. Broadly speaking, e-governance can be referred to as the uses and applications of ICT in public administration to conduct processes to effectively manage data and information to enhance public service delivery for empowerment of the citizens. Digital developments of recent years like online services, big data, social media, mobile apps, cloud computing etc. now influence people and the government tremendously.

Use of e-governance can make public administration fast and effective, provide better services, and respond to the demands of transparency and accountability. It can help the government to go green by effective management of natural resources aiding sustainability to environment. E-governance stimulates economic growth and promotes social inclusion of disabled and vulnerable sections of society. E-governance can provide benefits in the form of new employment, better health, better education, knowledge sharing, skills developments and capacity building for sustainable development. Quick and fast e-services eliminate middlemen and save both time and money. Without such online services, our cities and towns would have turned into more difficult places to live and the transport services would have been impossible to manage.

This short article highlights difference between e-governance and e-government presents our achievements in ICT and e-governance and examines our status in global perspective and suggests steps to be taken for improvement of global status of Bangladesh in e-governance and e-government.

E-Governance and e-government -governance deals with the board spectrum of the relation and networking in a government for uses and applications of ICT. E-governance defines and assesses the impact of technology on administration of a government and the relations between government offices and communication of the government with different segments of the society. E-governance encompasses steps and actions of government agen-

cies to develop and administer with a view to ensure implementation of e-government services to the public.

On the other hand, e-government (short for electronic government) is actually a narrower discipline dealing with the development of online services to the citizens. Examples of e-government services are e-tax, e-transportation, e-health and the like. E-government is also termed as e-go, Internet government, digital government, online government, connected government by different authors and agencies. E-government encompasses online interactions between citizens and government (C2G), between government and agencies (G2G), between government and citizens (G2C), between government and employees (G2E), between government and business (G2B) etc. Basically e-government refers to the utilisation of ICT including web-based communications to enhance speed, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by the government to the citizens of different sections of society

Our achievements
The slogan of "Digital Bangladesh" of the Government of Bangladesh has

million Internet subscribers, enjoys the fruits of e-governance in numerous areas of activities. The ultimate objective is to make more and more e-services available to the people with increased digitalisation.

Popular examples of available e-services are: registration for admission to academic institutions, publication of results of examinations, registration for jobs abroad, registration for pilgrimage, delivery of official forms, online submission of tax returns, online tendering, online banking and many more. SMS services for lodging complaints to police stations, online bill payments for utility services, instant communication with persons working abroad, and e-passports are examples of more e-services.

Telemedicine services, videoconferencing for the treatment of diseases, and video conferencing for administrative activities are special examples of e-services available for rural Bangladesh. Setting up of nearly five thousand Union Information Service Centers is a great boost for e-service delivery, especially for rural areas. Turning eight thousand village post offices and approximately five

E-Government Development Index E-government Development Index (EGDI) of United Nations (UN) is a composite indicator or measure of the capacity of a government to use ICT for delivery of services to the citizens. EGDI is useful for government officials, researchers, policy makers, civil society and the private sectors etc. to gain deeper understanding of relative position of a country for delivery of inclusive and accountable services to the citizens in general.

UN publishes EGDI, every two years, as a result of survey; which provides a snapshot with relative rankings of developments of e-government of the member countries. The survey provides relevant information for the policy makers and government departments in shaping e-government programs for

participation and mobile government etc.

Telecommunication infrastructure component: This component is an average of five indicators. They are: estimated Internet users per 100 inhabitants, number of fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants, number of mobile subscribers per 100 inhabitants, number of wireless broadband subscribers per 100 inhabitants and number of fixed broadband subscribers per 100 inhabitants. It is observed that in the 2014 survey report, special emphasis is given on broadband communication services. ITU (International Telecommunication Union) is the primary source of data in the cases mentioned above.

Human capital component: For calculation of human capital component, it was

Table 2: Average scores of four economic groups of countries

Categories	EGDI	Online Service Component	Telecomm. Infrastructure Component	Human Capital Component
High-Income	0.7207	0.6503	0.6845	0.8343
Upper Middle-Income	0.4828	0.3709	0.3522	0.7253
Lower Middle-Income	0.3523	0.3076	0.2307	0.5787
Low-Income	0.2094	0.1523	0.0876	0.3884

Table 1: EGDI status of Bangladesh and its neighbouring countries.

Name of the Countries	Rank Out of 193	EGDI	Online Service Component	Telecomm Infrastructure Component	Human Capital Component
Sri Lanka	74	0.5418	0.6535	0.2341	0.7376
Maldives	94	0.4813	0.3622	0.3952	0.6865
India	118	0.3834	0.5433	0.1372	0.4698
Bhutan	143	0.2829	0.2441	0.1755	0.4290
Bangladesh	148	0.2757	0.3465	0.0941	0.3866
Pakistan	158	0.2580	0.3228	0.1174	0.3337
Nepal	165	0.2344	0.1575	0.1684	0.3774
Afghanistan	173	0.1900	0.1811	0.1472	0.2418
Myanmar	175	0.1869	0.0236	0.0084	0.5288

special significance for e-governance for national development. Digital Bangladesh with Vision 2021 is a big impetus for the use of digital technology for e-governance in the country. In spite of several bottlenecks and limitations, works are in progress for realisation of e-governance in all areas of administration. Many e-government projects have already been completed and a big number of projects are under progress. The nation, with well over 120 million mobile subscribers and 43

hundred upazila post offices into e-centres and the introduction of mobile money order and postal cash cards are significant achievements in the recent past. Union Information Centres, District Information Cells, National Information Cell are also revolutionary additions for e-services for the citizens. There are many more developments in the line. Deputy Commissioner Offices in districts and UNO offices in upazilas provide a large number of e-services to rural clients.

development activities. EGDI is based on assessment of online presence by assessing the national websites and e-government policies and strategies for delivery of government services. The assessments rate the performance in e-government of countries relative to one another and not in an absolute basis.

Mathematically, the EGDI is a weighted average of three normalised scores on three important dimensions (or components). They are: online service component, telecommunication infrastructure component and human capital component. The index for each of them indicates in itself a composite measure which is accounted independently (UN E-Government Survey 2014, <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Data-Center>).

Online service component: Online service component mainly focuses on integrated online services delivery, use of e-government to provide information and services to citizen on environment related issue, e-infrastructure and its role for bridging the digital divide for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as the poor, the disabled, women, children and youth, elderly citizens, minority groups with emphasis on 'open government data' e-procurement, e-

stressed that young people should be able to receive high-quality education from early childhood to post-primary schooling, including not only formal education but also life skills and vocational education and training. Four indicators for human capital component are: adult literacy, gross enrolment ratio, expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling.

Bangladesh in global ranking
It is useful to assess the status of e-government in Bangladesh in global perspective. As mentioned earlier, every two years the UN publishes the e-government survey with ranking of e-government developments of the member countries. EGDI is the basis of measuring the status of e-government of the countries.

In spite of mentionable achievements in the recent past in the use of ICT for governance and expansion of e-service delivery to the citizens, it will be worthwhile to examine our position in a global perspective. This can be explained by the benchmarking indexes of responsible international organisations like UN, World Economic Forum, and ITU.