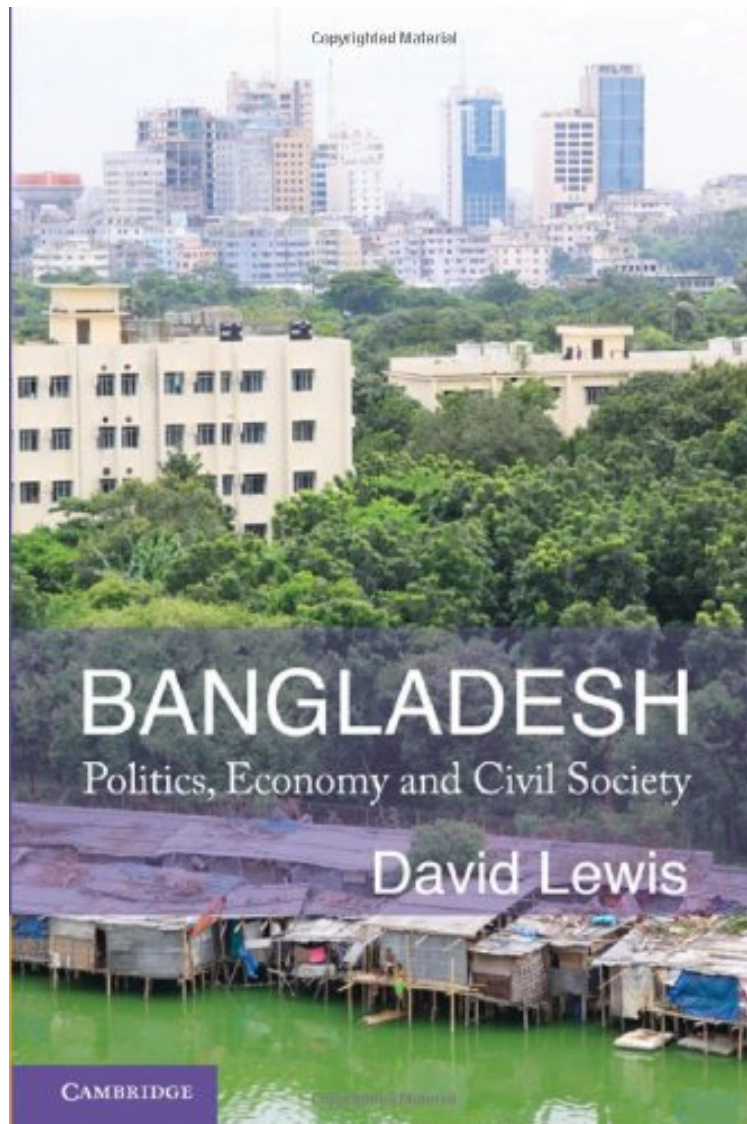


Bangladesh

David Lewis

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David Lewis : Bangladesh before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bangladesh:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A superb introduction to contemporary BangladeshBy Jonathan GilliganApart from tiny city-states, Bangladesh is the most densely populated nation on earth and has the fourth largest Muslim population in the world. Bangladesh is a rapidly growing economic powerhouse, second only to China in exporting ready-made garments to the West. It ranks among the worst nations on earth for corruption and lack of transparency in government. It is perhaps best known to most people in the developed world as the poster case of vulnerability to global warming and sea-level rise. Robert Kaplan has described Bangladesh as a crucial strategic

nation in the struggle among great powers for control of the Indian Ocean. Yet this fascinating country, so important economically and strategically, is poorly understood in the US and Europe and people wishing to acquaint themselves with its history, politics, economics, and environment have long been frustrated by the lack of a good book that describes contemporary Bangladesh. David Lewis has relieved this frustration with an outstanding and much-needed book suitable both for academics studying Bangladesh and for members of the general public who want to understand this nation. Lewis's book makes an excellent companion to Willem van Schendel's excellent "A History of Bangladesh" Van Schendel masterfully covers the Bengal Delta and Bangladesh from the dawn of history through Bangladesh's independence in 1971 and the first decade or so of independence. But from the early 1980s on, van Schendel speeds through the last three decades of Bangladesh's history in a way that leaves the reader wanting a clearer and more focused account of the remarkable transformations the nation has seen in the last three decades. This is where Lewis steps in. Building on van Schendel's framework of describing the Bengal delta as "a region of multiple frontiers" comprising land-water, linguistic, agrarian, political, and religious boundaries, Lewis weaves together the interactions between linguistic, religious, political, economic, demographic, and environmental aspects of the recent history of Bangladesh. Lewis does a masterful job of weaving these threads together while keeping the reader clear on the chronology of events and lucidly explaining difficult technical concepts. This book is very readable, clear, well organized, insightful, and well documented with citations to other literature. Following up on Lewis's excellent bibliography has been one of the many great pleasures of reading this book. The book works both as a narrative history, to be read from beginning to end, and as a concise reference for facts and figures about the changing economy and demographics of Bangladesh. When I first read this book, I got so excited that I opened an email to several friends and ended up staying up hours past my bedtime typing in excerpts and synopses. Each time I thought I would put the book aside and go to sleep, I found one more thing I had to tell someone about before I went to sleep. I recommend this book enthusiastically to anyone who wants a clear, thoughtful, well-researched introduction to the history of Bangladesh since its liberation, and especially the dramatic economic and political transformation of the last 20 years.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good book. By Customer Very interesting and informative book on Bangladesh. Everything explained thoroughly and it is an easy book to follow. Taught me a lot

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A joyous read on Bangladesh: Factual, well researched expert narrative with valuable nuggets of critical knowledge and trends

By MDA 'Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Civil Society' by David Lewis is a seminal and scholarly work that makes compelling arguments for recognizing the importance of this rapidly developing nation on the world stage. It should be a joyous read for Bangladeshis and useful to those people and organizations interested in Bangladesh. It is likely to become a practical, usable book for planners, growth initiators and donors. This book has the stamp of comprehensive thinking on critical aspects that are important for understanding, including

- a) how this strategically situated Asian country of more than one hundred sixty million people has evolved and reached its present situation,
- b) what now needs to be focused on and overcome in order to continue a transition to a sustained and equitable growth, and
- c) how an effective civil society is coming into being to help articulate and implement effective policies and nudging the state towards taking the action required to reach these goals.

A clearly written and engaging narrative, provides valuable nuggets of critical knowledge and trends. It provides a balanced view, with an objectivity and depth that is missing in other more superficial treatments. As a result, the book should appeal to the hearts and minds of a wide variety of Bangladeshi and international readers. There are very few examples of an integrated book that coherently threads together a realistic picture of Bangladesh. This book is an intelligent and up to date compendium of information. It provides a factual description complemented with insightful commentary to help us understand the rich and complex history of Bangladesh, its transition from a 'basket case' economy in the 1970s to becoming one of the Goldman Sachs 'next eleven' growth economies that have been achieving a year on year GDP growth rate of over six percent. Finally, the book also discusses the evolution of a civil society that is helping to play an essential role as catalyst for the growth and positive change. Based on facts and research supported by over one hundred cited sources, the book leaves the reader with the distinct impression and touch of a highly knowledgeable expert on Bangladesh, a product of the author's research and observation in Bangladesh over a long period. To summarize, this book cogently articulates current political, economic and social concerns and one hopes that the picture that it paints will also contribute to critical thinking and meaningful action in the future. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in Bangladesh.

Since its hard-won independence from Pakistan, Bangladesh has been ravaged by economic and environmental disasters. Only recently has the country begun to emerge as a fragile, but functioning, parliamentary democracy. The story of Bangladesh, told through the pages of this concise and readable book, is a truly remarkable one. By delving into its past, and through an analysis of the economic, political and social changes that have taken place over the last twenty years, the book explains how Bangladesh is becoming of increasing interest to the international community as a portal into some of the key issues of our age. In this way the book offers an important corrective to the view of Bangladesh as a failed state.

"This book analyzing the social, political and economic changes in Bangladesh presents the complex story of the evolution of a new state in a globalized world. It highlights the challenges, achievements and dilemmas of Bangladesh and provides a new perspective to the country. The study will be an excellent resource for academics, policy makers as well as practitioners interested in understanding the interlocking processes of global and local development." - Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh

"The book is a thorough yet concise account of this vastly understudied and under-reported country of 150 million people. It would be an ideal text for a university course on South Asian politics or anyone wishing to get a well-written and comprehensive background on contemporary Bangladesh. Diplomats, journalists, donor officials, and business representatives will find it an excellent introduction to this country." - Harry Blair, Yale University

"Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Civil Society offers important new insights into the changing role and growing importance of Bangladesh within the global political-economic order. But it should also be a key text for anyone who wants to get to know Bangladesh - a lively introduction to a country that few outsiders ever get to know as well as Professor Lewis." - Naomi Hossain, Institute of Development Studies (IDS)

About the Author David Lewis is an anthropologist by training and has written and researched extensively on development issues, particularly with reference to South Asia. His primary geographical focus is Bangladesh, but he has also worked in Nepal, India and the Philippines. Books include *Anthropology, Development and the Postmodern Challenge* (with K. Gardner, 1996) and *The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations* (2001). He recently completed a life work history research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) on the experiences and policy implications of activists and professionals who cross between the public sector and the non-governmental sectors. He is currently Professor of Social Policy and Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science.