



“The impact of climate change on the developing countries, particularly on low-income countries like Bangladesh, is compounded by high population density, low resource base, high incidence of natural disasters, salinity intrusion and submergence of land due to sea level rise. The situation would become disastrous with even a meter rise of sea level due to global warming, as it would inundate a fifth of Bangladesh, displacing nearly thirty million people and leading to mass movement of people.”

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh ¹



Bangladesh is a densely-populated state in South Asia. Geographically, it is predominantly a low-lying river delta, which means its concerns about climate change are in the realm of water quality, availability, and rising sea levels. With sea level rise, the population will become more vulnerable, and could be forced to move. Its major river systems all originate outside of its borders, bringing a source of international tension to water issues. Sea level rise is already causing inundation and saline intrusion along the coasts. Throughout its history, Bangladesh has been victimized by powerful tropical cyclones, and with a predicted increase, even more of the population is at risk. ²

Summary

Country: **Bangladesh**

Region: **South Asia**

ASP Assessment:

- Vulnerability: **High**
- Perception of Climate Change: **Security Threat**
- Capacity: **Low**
- Preparedness: **High**
- Overall Assessment: **Good**

The Climate Threats

Regional Disaster Vulnerability

- Increasing frequency and severity of tropical cyclones.
- Flood are frequent and exacerbated by sediment transported by river systems³
- More varied precipitation patterns
- Sea level rise threatening coastal and river-side communities ⁴

The Need to Adapt

- Required continued financial support from international community
- Climate unpredictability will make require changing agricultural practices
- Protecting dense urban areas from flooding⁶

Links Between Climate and Conflict

- Conflict over natural resource management
- Displaced population seeking refuge in urban areas or neighboring countries⁵

Direct Threats to Homeland Security

- Adverse environmental degradation affecting country's food security⁷
- Displaced, low skilled refugees crowding in urban areas and crossing borders⁸



How is the Country Preparing for Climate Threats

Preparing for Disaster Response

“The Bangladesh army has to play a very important role in evacuation, rescue, relief, and rehabilitation operations during disaster”⁹

- Standing Orders on Disasters, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management Bureau

Adapting Installations

“Prepare and continuously update army action plan for security and safety of people, materials, installations, and equipment”¹¹

- Standing Orders on Disasters, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management Bureau

Breaking the Link between Climate and Conflict

“Resource scarcity has the potential to be a contributing factor to conflict and instability”¹⁰

- Major General Muniruzzaman, retired Bangladesh military officer

Planning for Homeland Security Threats

“On the basis of requisition of the government, deploy the armed forces for disaster response, relief, and rehabilitation work in aid to the civil powers”¹²

- Dr. M Aslam Alam, Secretary in Charge of Disaster Management and Relief Division

Analysis

There is no region of the world that faces more threats from climate change than South Asia. Bangladesh is uniquely vulnerable to a changing climate because of a combination of rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and uncertain transboundary river flows. Away from the seashore, China holds the high ground in the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas, and complicates the geopolitical picture further by acting as the source of the region’s fresh water. The problems of a changing climate combine with already existing social problems like religious strife, poverty, political uncertainty, high population density, and rapid urbanization to create a very dangerous cocktail of already existing security threats. With a population of more than 140 million people, Bangladesh is very vulnerable. However, it is also very aware of the national security threats of climate change, and its military and governments have begun planning for climate change. Therefore, it rates as “*Highly vulnerable, but somewhat prepared.*”

The American Security Project’s Global Security Defense Index on Climate Change is an examination of how international governments and militaries plan for and anticipate the strategic threats of climate change.

For more information and references see:

globalsecuritydefenseindex.org