

# American Foreign Policy Council

## BANGLADESH

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### QUICK FACTS

Population: 156,186,882 (July 2016 est.)

Area: 148,460 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Bengali at least 98%, ethnic groups 1.1%

Religions: Muslim 89.1%, Hindu 10%, other 0.9% (includes Buddhist, Christian)

Government Type: Parliamentary Republic

GDP (official exchange rate): \$226.8 billion (2015 est.)

*Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (January 2017)*

### OVERVIEW

*Islam exerts a profound influence on the society and politics of Bangladesh. Islamist activity in Bangladesh takes three broad forms: the traditional revivalism of grassroots movements such as the Hefazat-e-Islam, Ahl-i-Hadith and Tablighi Jama'at; the incremental political Islam of Islamic political parties (most prominently the Bangladesh Jama'at-i-Islami); and the more radical, subversive activism of jihadist organizations such as the Harkatul Jihad al-Islam (HUJIB) and Jagrato Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMB), which seek to capture state power through unconstitutional or violent means. Shortly after its independence from Pakistan in December 1971, Bangladesh introduced secularism, before rejecting it in 1975 in favor of a moderate Muslim state. In 1988, Islam became the official state religion. In 2011, Bangladesh again introduced secularism through the 15th amendment to its constitution. Under this new amendment to the constitution despite having the secular state ideology, Islam as the State religion was retained in the constitution and Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem (In the name of Allah most gracious and most merciful) was retained on the Preamble to the constitution. Although 'Absolute faith and trust in Allah'*

*was removed from the Constitution, and freedom of religion was revived and the provision for religion-based politics was maintained.<sup>1</sup>*

## ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

Islamist activity in Bangladesh can be placed in three general categories: the traditional revivalism of grassroots movements, the incremental political Islam of the country's Islamic political parties, and the more radical, subversive activism of *jihadist* organizations.

### *Islamic revivalism*

*Hefazat-e-Islam* (Hefazat), *Ahl-i-Hadith Bangladesh* (AHAB) and *Tablighi Jama'at* are the three main movements in Islamic revivalism.

Bangladesh *Hefazat-e-Islam* (Hefazat) meaning "Protectorate of Islam in Bangladesh" was born in January 2010, protesting the then Awami league Government's proposed Women Development Policy (Nary Unnayan Nity) which planned to give women the equal rights of inheritance as men<sup>2</sup> contradicting the Quranic law of inheritance.<sup>3</sup> Mawlana Ahmad Shafi, a 93-year-old religious scholar and the chairman of the Bangladesh *Qaumi Madrassa* system<sup>4</sup> is the supreme leader of the Hifazat.<sup>5</sup> The headquarter of Hefazat is located in the port city of Chittagong, The Hefazat enjoys the support of more than 25,000 madrassas, or religious schools, across Bangladesh. Teachers and students at these madrassas belong to these organizations.<sup>6</sup>

The Hefazat-e Islam is a strong alliance of about a dozen Islamic organisations united under one banner very recently.<sup>7</sup> Unlike a political party it acts as a pressure group in order to protect the country from anti-Islamic activities. The organization is claimed to be financed through charity and donations.<sup>8</sup> It does not seek power through elections, but aims to extend its support to those parties who can establish proper Islamic ways of lives. It normally organizes issue oriented program. It acts as the most influential pressure group in the country. Till today the Hefazat is organized and carrying out religious movement based on 13 point demands including a ban on mixing of men and women in public places, the removal of sculptures and demands for the retention "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah" in the preamble of the constitution of Bangladesh.<sup>9</sup> Hefazat-e-Islam has recently come to the centre of national politics by an extraordinary event. It organized a demonstration of about half million people and paralyzed the city of Dhaka on 5 May, 2013 demanding the implementation of their 13 point demands.<sup>10</sup> Among the existing political parties all but Marxist organizations want to build rapport with Hefazat-e-Islam in order to utilize their huge support base in rural Bangladesh to win the future actions. Despite wide ideological differences the main stream political parties like, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Bangladesh Awamileague (BAL), and Bangladesh Jaty Party (BJP) either latent or manifestly try to maintain a liaison with the Hefazat just to exploit their support to win the future elections. The supporters of *Hefazat* say it is campaigning to "save Islam" in Bangladesh, and the detractors fear that it will take the country, "back into the dark ages".<sup>11</sup>

(AHAB) was founded by Siddiq Hasan and Syed Nazir Hossain in British India in the 1830s and found its way to Bengal.

AHAB subscribes to *Wahhabi* ideology, following the exclusionary teachings of Saudi Arabia's Islamic *ulema* (clergy). As part of this worldview, the group does not recognize any single school of law, and relies only on the Quran and *hadith*.<sup>12</sup> AHAB exists in about 40 districts, and claims more than 25 million people as followers.<sup>13</sup> It aims to disseminate the knowledge of the Koran and the *Hadith*, and does not openly involve itself in politics. Instead, it seeks to reorganize the Muslim community and implement the principle of the *Kalemai Tayeba* (faith) in all walks of life.<sup>14</sup> AHAB's funding comes from membership donations and a considerable supply of foreign donations, particularly from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Arab countries.<sup>15</sup>

*Tablighi Jama'at* was founded in the 1920s by Mohammad Ilyas Shah with the objective of educating non-practicing Muslims on the subcontinent in how to perform daily prayer (*salat*) and lead a Muslim life in accordance with the teaching of Prophet Muhammad.<sup>16</sup> *Tablighi Jama'at* aims to bolster Islamic ideals and culture among Muslims.<sup>17</sup> The famous Kakrail mosque in Dhaka serves as the group's headquarters in Bangladesh. The missionary movement is organized by the volunteer work of dedicated religious individuals of all classes, but the middle class is dominant.<sup>18</sup> It organizes meetings, seminars and symposia, as well as an annual *Istema* (assembly) attended by millions of people worldwide—the second largest congregation of Muslims in the world, after the pilgrimage to Mecca. That conference is held annually in the industrial town of Tongi on the banks of the Turag River. Although it does not have links with any political party, *Tablighi Jama'at* receives support from the Bangladeshi government in logistics, maintenance of law and order, traffic, health and sanitation services.<sup>19</sup> Millions of followers are active throughout Bangladesh, and the movement has significant impact on social life within the country. The TJ works for the improvement of the individual's Islamic practices and avoids radicalization/political Islam.

### *Political Islam*

The most important Islamist political party is *Bangladesh Jama'at-i-Islami* (BJI), originally known as simply *Jama'at-i-Islami* (JI). JI was founded in the early 1940s in British India by Islamic ideologue Syed Abul Ala Moududi. After Bangladesh's independence, JI was banned as a communal party in a secular state.<sup>20</sup> Though proscribed, it continued to operate underground. In 1976, renowned JI leader of former East Pakistan Maulana Abdur Rahim resumed JI activities through the formation of a new party called the Islamic Democratic League (IDL).<sup>21</sup> Six JI leaders ran on the IDL ticket and won seats in Bangladesh's parliament in 1979. The JI was then revived and began operating in Bangladesh in 1979 under its acting *emir* (head), Abbas Ali Khan, when the ban on religious-based political parties was withdrawn.<sup>22</sup> Maulana Motiur Rahman Nijami was then elected *emir* in 2002, a post he continued to occupy until he was executed in May 2016 through the verdict of the Highest Court of Bangladesh for his involvement with the War crimes in 1971 during the liberation War of

Bangladesh. After Nijami's death, JI renamed itself BJI and elected Maqbul Ahmed, as its new leader who had been acting as *emir* for six years when real emir Nizami was imprisoned.<sup>23</sup> (See footnote for explanation)

BJI focuses on obtaining power through democratic elections and the constitutional process. BJI believes in both Bangladeshi nationalism and the idea of Islamic democracy. The JI web site shows that "the JIB is striving democratically to enforce God-fearing, honest, and efficient leadership."<sup>24</sup> BJI aims to create national unity and rejuvenate Islamic values in every sphere of national life with the aim to safeguard the country from internal disorder and the attack of outsiders.<sup>25</sup> BJI follows four principles: educating the people with proper Islamic knowledge and organizing them; developing moral values among them; providing social services on the basis of Islamic values; finally, improving the system of governance by replacing the secular and oppressive leadership through God fearing, honest and qualified leadership at all levels through democratic means.<sup>26</sup> BJI is the largest functioning Islamic party in Bangladesh, and is popular among students, the academic intelligentsia, civil servants, the military and other important sectors of Bangladeshi society.<sup>27</sup> However, its overall political impact remains limited; in the country's 1986 parliamentary elections, the JI won 10 seats; in 1991, 18 seats; and in 1996, three seats. In 2001 the JI again secured 17 seats,<sup>28</sup> and finally in the 2008 election, the JI once again received only 2 parliamentary seats with just 4.5 percent of the popular vote.<sup>29</sup> BJI as 18 party alliance partner did not take part in the 2014 parliamentary elections to measure their nationwide current popularity.

The BJI boasts a broad financial network, though its yearly income has never been disclosed publicly. It indirectly operates many financial institutions, including Islamic banks and Islamic insurance companies, as well as private universities, medical colleges and private schools. The Islamic Bank Bangladesh Ltd., a BJI-managed bank, is claimed to have emerged as one of the most successful commercial banks of Bangladesh.<sup>30</sup> These businesses generate huge profits.<sup>31</sup> The ruling Awami league AL government has established its control and monitoring of the financial institutions of JI, most prominently by having four of the five-person board of directors for the bank fired and replaced with pro-government directors, after the bank was accused of financing terrorism in 2014.<sup>32</sup> Unlike other political parties in Bangladesh, the BJI claims that its workers and members contribute money to the party fund according to their capability.<sup>33</sup> The party also has large numbers of supporters and sympathizers in Middle Eastern countries, Europe and North America, who donate regularly.<sup>34</sup> Despite its Islamic ideology, however, BJI has managed to successfully attract western-educated elites,<sup>35</sup> and is now considered to be the premier mainstream Islamic modernist party in the country.

Apart from BJI, many other minor Islamic parties exist in Bangladesh. Although the number of registered Islamic parties stands at just eight, there are more than 100 Islamic parties that exist in one form or another in the country.<sup>36</sup> The most important among them are: the Bangladesh Muslim League, *Nizam-I Islam*, *Bangladesh Khilafat Andolon*, *Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis*, *Islamic Andolon*, *Jamat-i Ulema Is-*

lam, and the *Islamic Oikko Jote*.<sup>37</sup> All operate legally under the country's constitution, but their organizations are weak and support bases slim. Like BJI, each advocates the imposition of Islamic law in Bangladesh.

### *Violent Islamist groups*

Since the 1990s, al-Qaeda has boasted a considerable presence in Bangladesh, represented by underground organizations such as *Harkatul Jihad al-Islam* (HUJIB), *Jagrato Muslim Janata Bangladesh* (JMB) and *Ansarullah Bangla Team* (ABT). After September 11th and the start of the War on Terror, the al-Qaeda network gravitated even more toward Bangladesh, attracted by the country's fragile economy and weak capacity to combat terrorism.

*Harkatul Jihad al-Islam* was founded in Bangladesh in 1992, with the goal of establishing Islamic *hukumah* (rule) in Bangladesh via *jihad*.<sup>38</sup> Comprised of veterans of the Afghan *jihad*, HUJIB is reported to have received initial funding from bin Laden's International Islamic Front.<sup>39</sup> In 2005, the Bangladeshi government banned the organization,<sup>40</sup> and in 2008, the U.S. formally listed HUJIB as a terrorist organization.<sup>41</sup> HUJIB's principal areas of activities are limited to the area between Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, and the border with Myanmar.<sup>42</sup> The group reportedly maintains six camps in the hilly Chittagong Hill Tract region where its cadres are provided arms training. While there is no authoritative information about the actual size of the group, it is estimated to have around 15,000 members.<sup>43</sup> Since 2005, frequent raids on HUJIB centers by Bangladeshi Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) police and army—and the continuous monitoring of their activities by law enforcement agencies—have significantly weakened the group's capabilities,<sup>44</sup> although it is unknown whether this terrorist outfit is totally eliminated or not. HUJIB reportedly receives financial assistance from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan via Muslim non-governmental organizations active in Bangladesh.<sup>45</sup> Mufti Hannan, HUJIB's operational commander, launched an attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury in 2004. In 2007, he was arrested and sentenced to death for the crime. The appellate Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court in its final verdict on December upheld the death sentence of Mufti Abdul Hannan and two others in a case filed over the grenade attack on ex-British High commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury in 2004.<sup>46</sup>

The *Jammatul Mujahideen Bangladesh* (JMB) came into existence in 1998 with the aim of establishing *sharia* law in Bangladesh through armed revolution. Its supreme leader was Shaikh Abdur Rahman, and second in command was Siddiqur Rahman (a.k.a. Bangla Bhai), who also led its military wing, the *Jagroto Muslim Janata Bangladesh* (JMJB). In 2004, Bangla Bhai unleashed a wave of terror in the northern part of Bangladesh as part of an ostensible war on outlawed Marxist extremists. The targets of the JMB onslaught were judges and lawyers, who were targeted in a bid by the group to establish an Islamic legal system.<sup>47</sup> The group's last large-scale attack was a series of bombings in August 2005. The organization reportedly receives funding from various sources, including individual donors from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia,

the UAE, Bahrain, Pakistan, and Libya.<sup>48</sup> Funding for the group also flows through NGOs, which—in spite of their ostensibly humanitarian activism—have aided the activities of the JMB.<sup>49</sup> Several international NGOs—among them the Kuwait-based Revival of Islamic Heritage and Doulatul Kuwait, the UAE-based Al Fuzaira, the Bahrain-based Doulatul Bahrain and the Saudi Arabia-based Al Haramain Islamic Institute—have reportedly provided funding to the group in the past.<sup>50</sup> The JMB reportedly has approximately 10,000 full time and 100,000 part-time members, including teachers, students and ordinary citizens.<sup>51</sup> JMB was banned in 2005 by the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. Its principal leader, Abdur Rahman, its second-in-command, Bangla Bhai, and four other members of the *Majlish-e-sura* (the group's top decision making body) were tried and executed in Bangladesh in 2007.<sup>52</sup> As a result of the execution of their main leaders and strict observation and monitoring of their movements by the law enforcing agencies and government's zero tolerance policy to them, the JMB's activities apparently ceased to exist.

*Ansarullah Bangla Team* (ABT) is a militant group that has pledged to uphold al-Qaeda's ideology, and is connected with the organization's Persian Gulf franchise, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. It began operating in Bangladesh during 2007 under the name *Jamaat-ul-Muslimin*, but dissolved due to a shortage of funds. The group resurfaced during 2013 as the ABT. The government of Bangladesh banned this terrorist outfit in May 2015 under the country's current anti-terrorism law.<sup>53</sup> This group has been implicated in the attacks and killings of secular bloggers from 2013-2015.<sup>54</sup>

Domestic *jihadism* has also been influenced by the Islamic State, which has begun to exert an influence on Islamist activities in Bangladesh. In 2016, the country experienced a series of terrorist attacks reportedly carried out by homegrown terrorists inspired by the Islamic State (ISIS). The most significant one was the attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka on 1 July 1, 2016, which killed 22 people. The Islamic State claimed the responsibility for the incident, but the Bangladeshi government denied ISIS's involvement and claimed that homegrown militants from JMB were involved.<sup>55</sup> Experts continue to debate whether the gunmen were linked to ISIS, or al Qaeda, or JMB.<sup>56</sup>

## ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Bangladesh, widely regarded as a moderate Muslim democracy, is 89.7 percent Muslim and 9.2 percent Hindu, 0.7 percent Buddhists, 0.3 percent Christian. Animist and believers in tribal faith constitute 0.1 percent of the population.<sup>57</sup> More than 98 percent of the population is ethnic Bengali. Non-Bengalis include a minute number of Urdu-speaking Biharis. Among the country's Muslims, more than 99 percent are Sunni and follow the Hanafi school. Several Shi'a and Ahmadiya sects are also represented, albeit only nominally.<sup>58</sup>

Mosques in Bangladesh serve as active centers of religious activity. In the country's 65,000 villages, there are an estimated 133,197 mosques, which act as focal points for daily and weekly prayers and assembly.<sup>59</sup> Local donations, as well as donations from West Asian and African Muslim countries, provide for the construction and maintenance of these religious centers.<sup>60</sup> A parallel structure of some 58,126 *maqtabs* (informal Islamic schools) imparts basic Islamic knowledge to young children (including how to read the Koran, pray, etc.) Mosque *imams* act as influential elders in the country's rural power structure.

Most Bangladeshis follow an orthodox, traditional version of Islam. *Madrassas* (Islamic schools) have long been considered to be the center of traditional Islamic studies and the guardians of the orthodox Islam in Bangladesh. Of these, there are two types: *Qomi madrassas* are private in nature, receive no financial support from the government, and subsist on religious endowments and donations from the faithful. *Alia madrassas*, by contrast, are controlled by the government, which pays 80 percent of the salaries of their teachers and staff, as well as considerable portion of their development budget. One estimate shows that the total number of *madrassas* (both *Qomi* and *Alia*) is 13,406, with 230,732 teachers and 3,340,800 students.<sup>62</sup> These schools constitute the main current of traditional Islam in Bangladeshi society.

## ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

The forty-five-year political history of Bangladesh is typified by an official embrace of and accommodation with Islam by a succession of ruling governments. The current government in Bangladesh struggles with the role of Islamism in public life.

At the time of the country's independence in December 1971, the government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman introduced a secular democracy and later, one-party authoritarianism. But enforced secularism eventually provoked backlash from the Muslim majority,<sup>63</sup> leading to greater inclusion of Islam in public life. Prime Minister Rahman (commonly known as "Mujib") established public foundations in Bangladesh for the research and analysis of Islamic culture and society. Under his direction, Bangladesh also joined the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC, today known as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation). Beyond that, however, the practice of Islam in political form was severely circumscribed.

This balance was shattered in 1975 by a *coup d'état* that unseated Mujib and installed a military regime in his government's place. Bangladesh's new rulers wasted no time dropping secularism from the constitution and inserting a proviso emphasizing "absolute trust and faith in Almighty *Allab*."<sup>64</sup> Simultaneously, the new government allowed Islamic political parties, through a constitutional amendment, to return to politics, and included a constitutional addendum compelling Bangladesh to maintain fraternal relations among the Islamic countries based on Islamic solidarity.<sup>65</sup> After the

assassination of President Ziaur Rahman in May 1981, power was assumed by General Hossein Mohammad Ershad, who established Islam as the state religion, ushering a period of relative religio-political stability.

In 1990, however, the Ershad regime was ousted as a result of a massive political revolt and purge. Khaleda Zia, Rahman's widow, assumed power and became the first female prime minister in the new parliamentary democracy. Like her late husband, Zia pursued a pro-Islamic policy both domestically and abroad. In 1996, Sheikh Hasina, one of Mujib's surviving daughters, rose to power as part of the opposition Awami League (AL) political party, only to be subsequently ousted by a coalition government with Khaleda Zia at its helm.

Hasina has demonstrated a willingness to make common cause with religious radicals for political gain, signing an agreement with *Khilafat Majlis*—a group considered by some to be a pro-Taliban Islamist group—as a strategy to win the country's January 2007 election. The ploy worked, and in 2008 Sheikh Hasina returned to power, further buoyed by her pledge “not to harm Islam.”<sup>67</sup>

Despite her earlier partnership with *Khilafat Majlis*, Hasina has reinforced secularism and generally sought to combat Islamist forces. In February 2009, her government passed two key pieces of legislation: the Money Laundering Prevention Act (MLPA) and the Anti-terrorism Act (ATA).<sup>68</sup> The former empowered the Bangladesh Bank to freeze the accounts of suspected terrorist financiers, and directed it to take preventive measures against monetary transactions that might be used for financing terror acts. Together with the ATA, it also instituted the death penalty for terror financing and politically motivated acts of violence.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Hasina's government has aggressively prosecuted “war criminals” – Bangladeshis who sided with Pakistan during the war for independence – many of whom later became members of JI. This strategy effectively weakened Islamic forces, especially the JI.<sup>70</sup>

In 2011, the government imprisoned the top leaders of the JI and their allies on the grounds of their alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the Bangladesh's war for independence in 1971. A tribunal, dubbed the International War Crimes Tribunal (ICT), was founded to try the accused. However, the validity of the ICT soon came into serious question. *The Economist* magazine published an investigative report showing that the chief of the tribunal, Judge Nizamul Haq, had worked improperly by taking written advice and suggestion through e-mail and Skype conversations from an unauthorized Brussels-based lawyer regarding the trial.<sup>71</sup> At that point, the ICT had already sentenced five BJI leaders to death by hanging. Apart from those sentences, the ICT sentenced two other leaders to death, but the appellate division reduce one man's sentence to life in prison, while the other escaped. National and international media as well as human rights organizations, have questioned the ICT's track record.<sup>72</sup> The death sentences also provoked violent protests that resulted in the deaths of 100 people.<sup>73</sup>

Another key blow in the fight against JI came in 2011 as well, the Bangladesh Parliament passed the 15th amendment of the constitution. The amendment re-introduced secularism as the official framework of the state, but retained Islam as the state religion. In August 2013, the High Court of Bangladesh declared JI illegal, on the grounds that its character violated the newly secular constitution of the country.<sup>74</sup> Unless it wins an appeal, it will be a banned organization and unable to enter the January 2014 national election.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the appeal court did not give its verdict yet and the ruling coalition led by Awamileague captured all 300 seats, whereas 153 candidates declared uncontested winners in the parliament in the aftermath of the elections boycotted by the 18 party election alliance led by the BNP, one of the largest political parties in Bangladesh.<sup>76</sup> In a 2016 decision Bangladesh's High Court upheld Islam as the official religion of the Muslim-majority Bangladesh and legalized the co-existence of secularism and state religion Islam.<sup>77</sup>

## ENDNOTES

[1] Constitutional Amendments in Bangladesh, online: <http://studiesbangladesh.blogspot.ca/2011/06/constitutional-amendments-constitution.html>

[2] Julien Bouissou, "Bangladesh's radical Muslims uniting behind Hefazat-e-Islam", *The Guardian* 30Jul2013. online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/30/bangladesh-hefazat-e-islam-shah-ahmad-shafi>

[3] According to Quranic law, a daughter's share is half of a son's. In the proposed Women Development Policy, daughters were suggested to inherit equal property rights. For details on Muslim Family Law, see, Farah Deeba Chowdhury, *Islam and Women's Income :Dowry and Law in Bangladesh*, (London: Routledge,2017),35-48.

[4] The Qaumi madrassa is one of the two madra systems in Bangladesh. These madrassas are run by the community or the people (Qaum), as opposed to the state. Like charitable organizations, these institutions are financed through donations of the community. The Qaumi madrassas in Bangladesh are founded in light of the Darul Ulum Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, India founded in 1867. Hathazari Qaumi Madrassa is the first one established in Bangladesh following the Deobond model. These madrassas are also known as Khwarijee madrassas, which means that they are outside Government control. See, "Modernization of Madrassa Education in Bangladesh: A Strategy Paper", Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) Dhaka, Bangladesh June 2011 online: [http://ndc.gov.bd/lib\\_mgmt/webroot/earticle/2379/modernization\\_of\\_madrassa\\_education\\_in\\_Bangladesh.pdf](http://ndc.gov.bd/lib_mgmt/webroot/earticle/2379/modernization_of_madrassa_education_in_Bangladesh.pdf).

[5] Born in Rangunia in Chittagong district, Maolana Shafi earned higher education in Islamic Studies in Deoband in India. He returned to teaching at the Hat-hazari madrassa, where he had once studied, and later became its Principal. See, Toufique Imrose Khalidi, "Behind the rise of Bangladesh's Hifazat", online: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/05/201356134629980318.html>

[6] Sabir Mustafa "Hefazat-e Islam: Islamist coalition" BBC Bengali Service 6 May 2013 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22424708>

[7] Ibid.

[8] Julien Bouissou, op.cit.

[9] The 13 point demands raised by the Hefazat-e-Islam are the following: 1.Reinstate the phrase "Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah" in the Constitution as one of the fundamental principles of state policy; 2.Pass a law providing for capital punishment for maligning Allah, Islam and the Prophet Muhammad and for starting smear campaigns against Muslims; 3.Stop all propaganda and "derogatory comments" about the Prophet Muhammad by "atheist leaders" of the Shahbagh movement, atheist bloggers and other anti-Islamists; arrest them and ensure stern punishment to them; 4.Stop attacking, shooting, killing and persecuting the Prophet-loving Islamic scholars, madrassa students and people united by belief in Allah; 5.Release all the arrested Islamic scholars and madrassa students; 6.Lift restrictions on mosques and remove obstacles for the holding of religious programmes; 7. Declare Qadianis (Ahmadiyyas) non-Muslim and stop their publicity and conspiracies; 8.Stop foreign cultural intrusions, including free-mixing of men and women and candle-light vigils, and put an end to adultery, injustice and shamelessness, among other things, committed in the name of freedom of expression and the individual; 9. Stop turning Dhaka, the city of mosques, into a city of idols, and stop installing sculptures at road intersections, colleges and universities. 10.Scrap anti-Islam women policy and education policy and make Islamic education mandatory from primary to higher secondary levels; 11.. Stop threatening and intimidating teachers and students of the Qawmi madrassas, Islamic scholars, imams and khatibs; 12. Stop creating hatred among the younger generation against Muslims by misrepresentation of Islamic culture in the media; 13. Stop anti-Islam activities by non-governmental organisations, evil attempts by Qadianis and conversion by Christian missionaries in Chittagong Hill Tracts and elsewhere in the country. See, Frontline, May 17, 2013. Online: <http://www.frontline.in/world-affairs/the-13-demands/article4650805.ece>.

[10] Julien Bouissou op.cit.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Sufia M. Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity and Language in an Islamic Nation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 56.

- [13] “Ahle Hadith: New moves in religion-based politics”. PROBE News Magazine. 23 September ,2010, <http://web.archive.org/web/20120324204417/http://www.probenewsmagazine.com/index.php?index=2&contentId=596>.
- [14] K.M. Mohsin, “The Ahl-I Hadis movement in Bangladesh,”in Rafiuddin Ahmed,ed. Religion,Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh(New Delhi: South Asian publishers,1990), 179-182.
- [15] The Kuwait based NGO Saudi Revival of Islamic Heritage (RIHS) is the main source of funding to the Ahle Hadith Bangladesh. See PROBE News Magazine Dhaka, 9, iss. 14, September, 2010, 24-30, online: <http://www.probenewsmagazine.com>. On this issue also see, Militancy Mumtaz Ahmad Ahl-e-Hadith Movement in Bangladesh: History, Religion, Politics and Militancy “ online: <http://www.iiu.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/downloads/ird/downloads/Ahl-e-Hadith-Movement-in-Bangladesh-Complete.pdf>
- [16] Uddin, Constructing Bangladesh, 161-62.
- [17] Ahmed Shafiqul Huque and Muhammad Yehia Akhter, “The Ubiquity of Islam: Religion and Society in Bangladesh” Pacific Affairs 60, no.2 (1987), 217.
- [18] M. Rashiduzzaman, “Islam, Muslim Identity and Nationalism in Bangladesh,” Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern studies 18, no. 1 (1994), 54.
- [19] Ibid.
- [20] Banglapedia: Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, n.d., [http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Jamaat-e-Islami\\_Bangladesh](http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Jamaat-e-Islami_Bangladesh).
- [21] Ibid.
- [22] Ibidem.
- [23] Moqbul Ahamed was the acting Ameer and Motiur Rahman Nizami was the actual ameer during 2010-2016, when Nizami was imprisoned. See Rafiqul Islam Azad “ Maqbul Ahmed ‘elected’ Jamaat ameer,”The Independent, 21 September 2016. Online: <http://www.theindependentbd.com/home/printnews/60962>.
- [24] Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, online: <http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/en/aboutus.php>
- [25] See the official website of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami at <http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/en/details.php?artid=MTQ4>.
- [26] Porichity, Jamaati-Islami Bangladesh (Dhaka: 1981) p.5,p.10.
- [27] IshtiaqHossain and Noore Alam Siddiquee, “Islam in Bangladesh: the role of the Ghulam of Jamaat-I Islami ,” 384.
- [28] Banglapedia, “Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.”
- [29] Zaglul Haider, “The Ninth General Election in Bangladesh: The Fall of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Rise of the Bangladesh Awami league” The Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 34, no.3 (2011), 79.
- [30] Ferdous Ahmad, “Islamic Banking Blooms in Bangladesh” online: <http://islamicbanking.info/islamic-banking-in-bangladesh/>

- [31] See, Jamaat-e-Islami and its financial resources, online: <http://www.bangladeshlivenews.com/home/article-details/4560/column/Jamaat-e-Islami+and+its+financial+resources/>.
- [32] Golam Mowla, "How govt is taking control of Islami Bank," Dhaka Tribune, April 26, 2016, <http://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2016/apr/26/how-govt-taking-control-islami-bank#sthash.sR2DhIFn.dpuf>.
- [33] Supporters and workers of other parties do not make contribution to the party fund on a monthly basis, they collect money from the party leaders, and big businessmen, while, the BJI workers and supporters contribute a fixed amount of money to the party fund regularly/monthly basis.
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