

# BANGLADESH

## Providing Satellite Internet Services?

Photo by NASA on Unsplash

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### INTERNET FREEDOM

Partly Free

### INTERNET PENETRATION

25%

### FREQUENCY

C-band and Ka-band

**This document provides basic information about legal aspects of satellite internet services when provision of these services is being considered. This fact sheet comprises general guidance and cannot be a replacement for legal advice.**

### OVERVIEW

The contents of this factsheet pertain to the laws, regulations, and guidelines that prescribe the norms and obligations governing the provision and operation of satellite internet services in Bangladesh.

### RELEVANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The legal framework governing internet access comprises several key statutes in Bangladesh, including the *Telecommunication Act 2001*, *Digital Security Act 2018*, *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933*, and *Telegraph Act 1885*.

### REGULATORY BODIES

The **Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)** is responsible for regulating the establishment, operation, and maintenance of telecommunication services. It is also authorized to monitor and license satellite internet. In 2010, a new amendment was introduced that requires final approval from the **Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications** for the issuance, renewal, or cancellation of licenses.

### LEGAL NATURE OF SATELLITE INTERNET

Bangladesh does not have a specific national law that deals with the regulation of satellites or space activities.

The Bangladesh Communication Satellite Company Limited is a government-owned enterprise that is primarily responsible for planning and launching satellites. Bangladesh benefits from its own domestically developed satellite called Bangabandhu-1, which is used for telecommunications.

### ARE THERE INTERNET RESTRICTIONS?

The government has the power to mandate the BTRC to remove or block any information that is deemed to 'harm the nation'. This law has been used to justify the arrest of online journalists and internet users who have criticized the government, resulting in a self-censorship environment online.

### TYPES OF LICENSES

To offer satellite internet access, it is necessary to obtain the following licenses and authorizations:

- a) **ISP License:** This license allows the applicant to provide internet/data services and IP-based services to end users. It consists of nationwide, divisional, and district types, and is valid for five years.
- b) **VSAT License:** There are two classifications for this license, both of which require the applicant to meet multiple eligibility criteria verified by BTRC.
  - HUB Operator: this license is valid for 10 years.
  - User: Embassies, high commissions, international agencies, internationally recognized organizations, and foreign missions can obtain this license, which is valid for five years.
- c) **Satellite Operator License:** This license is valid for 15 years unless terminated or invalidated.

In addition to the licenses mentioned above, a No Objection Certificate is required to use radio equipment.

### END USERS' LICENSES

End users do not need licenses to access satellites for internet connectivity. Instead, they are free to choose any service provider that offers satellite internet access and subscribe to their services. Some of the providers include Square Informatix Limited, AND Telecom Limited, and DNS SatComm Limited.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

Since 2021, the BTRC has aimed to liberalize the telecommunications market and eliminate barriers that hinder foreign investment. As a result, foreign investors are now allowed to fully own their investments, up to a maximum of 100%. However, it should be noted that only companies are eligible to apply for licenses.