



# Constitution of the Bangladesh Cultural Society of New England

**Established 23 May 2009**

(With Amendments)

**ARTICLE I: Name****Section 1:**

The name of the organization shall be the **Bangladesh Cultural Society of New England (BCSNE)**, hereafter referred to as 'the Society'.

**ARTICLE II: Goals and Objectives****Section 1:**

The Society shall be a non-profit and nonpolitical organization. **(Note: see Amendment)**

**Section 2:**

The goals and objectives of the Society shall be to:

- (a) Provide cultural, intellectual, social and charitable welfare to the people of Bangladeshi origin;
- (b) Promote goodwill, understanding and appreciation of Bangladeshi culture among all persons regardless of color, creed, race, religion and national origin.
- (c) Promote Bangladesh-Australia friendship;
- (d) Promote cultural exchange with any other group, organization or institution interested in Bangladeshi culture, and
- (e) Facilitate the activities of any other professional, student, woman or any other group of Bangladeshis, provided that such groups or organizations are also non-profit and non-political organizations.

**Section 3:**

In order to achieve its goals and purposes as defined in Section 2, the Society shall seek to provide a/an:

- (a) Forum for the expression of common concerns of the community;
- (b) Vehicle for exchange of information and views on matters of interest to the Bangladeshi community;
- (d) Mode of propagation of the cultural heritage of Bangladesh through various means;
- (e) Space for an educational center for Bengali language, art, and folklore;
- (f) Meeting place for Bangladesh-Australian cultural enrichment;
- (g) Means to inculcate the values of Bangladeshi culture among the children and youth of the community; and

(h) Opportunity for honoring any distinguished person, association or institution who/which has contributed substantially for the cause of Bangladeshi people or culture.

### **ARTICLE III: Membership**

#### ***Section 1:***

The membership in the Society is open to all individuals sharing the objectives and purposes of the Society subject to the approval of the Executive Committee of the Society.

#### ***Section 2:***

There shall be four classes of membership:

(a) Individual membership: Open to any Bangladeshi over the age of 18 (UNE undergrad/postgrad students, UNE academic staff & researchers, professionals, others).

(b) Associate membership: Open to non-Bangladeshis and any person interested in Bangladesh society and culture.

(c) Honorary membership: Shall be awarded to any outstanding and eminent and/or benevolent person of the New England community, upon action by the Executive Committee and such membership shall extend for a period of one year from the date of the award.

(d) Life membership: Open to any General Member of the Society who has completed at least two years of membership. A one-time membership fee shall be levied that must be paid at the time of application for such membership.

#### ***Section 3:***

The Executive Committee may stipulate annual membership dues for each membership category in the beginning of each calendar year.

#### ***Section 4:***

Application of Membership:

All applications for membership shall be submitted to the Secretary in the prescribed form along with the current membership fee.

#### ***Section 5:***

Lapse of Membership:

Non-payment of annual dues by all categories of members (except life members) shall cause the lapse of membership in the Society.

**Section 6:**

Membership Period:

Annual membership period shall be coincident with the calendar year beginning on 1 January and terminating on 31 December. **(Note: see Amendment)**

**ARTICLE IV: Membership Fee, Rights & Privileges*****Section 1:***

Review of Membership Dues:

The Executive Committee may review the membership dues from time to time and may place before the general body for increase or decrease of such dues and final approval of such increase or decrease of dues shall be determined by the simple majority of the members present and voting.

***Section 2:***

Proration of Dues:

There shall not be any proration of dues.

***Section 3:***

Special Fees:

The Executive Committee may levy any special fees that become necessary and then only if reasonable.

***Section 4:***

Due Date of Dues:

The annual dues due to the Society shall be payable to the Treasurer. Members failing to pay dues by shall be declared in arrears and shall automatically be deprived of all privileges of membership in the Society.

***Section 5:***

Voting Right:

Each general member who is in conformity of Section 3 and 4 of this Article shall be eligible to vote on all business before the members at any general meeting.

**Section 7:**

Holding Office:

Each general member shall have the right to hold office if elected or appointed.

**Section 8:**

Rights by Categories of Members:

(a) General and life members under Article III Section 2 (a and d) shall have the same rights and privileges.

(b) Associate and Honorary members as defined in Article III, Section 2(b) and 2(c) shall be non-voting members.

**ARTICLE V: Management of the Society**

**Section 1:**

Executive Committee:

The activities of the Society shall be managed by an Executive Committee consisting of seven elected members each with a designated responsibility defined below:

(a) **President**, who shall preside over all meetings of the general body and of the Executive Committee and who shall have overall responsibility for the activities of the Society and making decisions on Executive Committee matters.

(b) **General Secretary**, who shall keep a record of all proceedings of the Executive Committee meetings and also of general meetings, and shall mail all notices, maintain appropriate records of membership of the Society, and who shall exercise such power as are provided by these by-laws and by the Executive Committee.

(c) **Joint Secretary**, who shall assist the General Secretary in executing his/her responsibilities and, during his/her absence, will perform his/her duties or other duties assigned to him/her by the Executive Committee.

(d) **Treasurer**, who shall keep a record of all financial transactions of the Society, deposit such funds in a bank designated by the Executive Committee, sign all checks along with President or General Secretary of the Society, prepare a financial report of the Society for presentation at the annual meeting and shall provide for auditing of the account books of the Society at least once a year prior to each annual meeting.

(e) **Cultural Secretary** will be responsible for organizing any cultural event with the assistance of the other members of the Executive Committee.

(f) Two **Members** of the Executive Committee shall undertake any duties assigned to them and shall assist the other office bearers of the Society.

**Section 2:**

Formation of Sub-Committees:

The Executive Committee has the power to form sub-committees for special purposes whenever necessary by co-opting members from the general body.

**Section 3:**

Responsibility:

(a) Each office bearer of the Society shall be jointly responsible to the general body of the Society for the activities of the Society.

(b) The General Secretary shall maintain an electronic mailing list and notify members of the activities of the Society and any other important information.

**Section 4:**

Election and Appointment of office Bearers:

(a) Elections by the general membership:

Each general member of the Society shall elect its office bearers as per Section 1(a), (b), (c), and (d) of Article V of these by-laws provided

- i) That cumulative voting shall not be allowed, and
- ii) That election of the office bearer shall be made only from among those persons nominated according to the requirements set forth in Article IX of this Constitution.

**Section 5:**

Term of Office:

Each office bearer shall be elected for a two-year term.

**Section 6:**

Removal of Office Bearers:

(a) Upon affirmative vote of two third of the Executive Committee, a delinquent office bearer may be removed from the office provided

- i) that an office bearer who has found consistently working against the goals of the Society; and
- ii) that an office bearer who has failed to attend three consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee without valid reasons.

(b) Removal by general body of members:

The general body of the members of the Society may remove an office bearer from the Executive Committee at any special meeting of the members provided, however, that

- i) Such removal is effective only upon the affirmative vote of 75 percent majority of members;
- ii) Quorum of such special meeting shall consist of 50 percent of the general body of the members;
- iii) Request to hold special meeting to affect the removal of office bearer must be signed by 25 percent of the general body of members;
- iv) The decision of the general body shall be final.

**Section 7:**

Vacancy:

A particular office shall be considered vacant upon happening of any one for the following events:

- (a) Resignation;
- (b) Refusal to serve in the position elected or selected for;
- (d) Removal as per Section 5 of this Article; and
- (e) Failure to maintain membership in the Society

**Section 8:**

Filling up of Vacancy:

- (a) Any member of the Society in good standing shall be co-opted by the Executive Committee to fill the vacancy occurred as per Section 6 of this Article only for the unexpired period.
- (b) In case the vacancy occurred in the position of President, the General Secretary shall perform the duties of the President of the Society until a new President is elected.

**Section 9:**

Quorum:

The majority membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the Executive Committee meeting. Any action taken in such meeting shall constitute actions by the Executive Committee.

**Section 10:**

Meetings of the Executive Committee:

(a) Regular meeting: The Executive Committee shall hold at least three regular meetings during one calendar year and that the notice of the meeting must be given by the General Secretary with the approval of the President one week prior to the meeting with the time and place of the meeting and such meeting may or may not have any particular agenda. **(Note: see Amendment)**

(b) Special meeting: A special meeting may be called by the President or, in his absence, by the General Secretary or any two Executive Committee members by notice given to all members of the Executive Committee two days prior to such meeting and the notice of such meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting indicating place and time.

**Section 11:**

Signing Contracts:

The President and the General Secretary shall sign all contractual documents on behalf of the Society.

**Section 12:**

Transfer of Records:

The outgoing Executive Committee shall bring all records of the Society to the annual general meeting of the Society. All records, assets, cash, bank accounts of the Society and every other charge shall be transferred to the custody of the newly elected Executive Committee within a week after the conclusion of the election.

**ARTICLE VI: Meetings****Section 1:**

Annual General Meeting:

The annual general meeting of the membership shall be held as follows:

(a) Place: The annual general meeting shall be held in a place convenient to all members of the Society.

(b) Time: The annual general meeting shall be held in the month of February of each year at a time convenient to the majority of the members of the Society. **(Note: see Amendment)**

**Section 2:**

Special Meeting:

Special meeting of the membership may be called at any time by the President of the Society or by the majority of the members of the Executive Committee or by written petition to the General Secretary by



at least twenty five percent of the members in good standing. Special meeting may be called within two weeks after receipt of the written request, provided, however, that no special meeting may be called unless the specific purpose(s) for holding said meeting are communicated to the General Secretary along with request for the special meeting.

***Section 3:***

Notice of the Meeting:

Notice of the annual and special meetings shall be mailed not less than a week prior to the scheduled meetings. Notice of special meetings shall contain a statement of purpose(s) of the meeting and no other business shall be transacted which does not pertain to such stated purpose(s).

***Section 4:***

Quorum:

For the purpose of transacting any business at any membership meeting one third of the members in good standing shall constitute a quorum.

***Section 5:***

Voting:

Voting on any question except as otherwise provided by these by-laws may be voice vote or show of hands unless the presiding officer shall order or any member shall demand that voting be written ballot.

***Section 6:***

Who shall preside:

The President of the Executive Committee or in his/her absence the General Secretary or in his/her absence any other Executive Committee Member nominated by the President shall preside all meetings.

***Section 7:***

Keeping of Minutes:

The General Secretary or, in his/her absence, the Joint Secretary shall keep the proceedings of the meeting in writing in the minute book of the Society.

## **ARTICLE IX: Election**

### ***Section 1:***

Nomination Process:

At least two weeks prior to scheduled elections the Executive Committee shall appoint an Election Commissioner, who shall be a senior member of the Society preferably a founding member or former Executive Committee member. He will be responsible for securing nominations and conducting the elections as detailed in Section 3 of this Article. Any member of the Society may nominate for any position as set forth in Article V, Section 1, Subsections (a) through (g); provided that another member shall second the nomination.

### ***Section 2:***

Nominees' duties:

In order for his/her name to be placed on the official ballot, each nominee for any position must:

- (a) express his/her acceptance by signing the nomination form;
- (b) be familiar with the Articles of this Constitution and by-laws of the Society and pledge to abide by them;
- (c) pledge to carry out the wishes of the general body and decisions of the Executive Committee to best of his/her abilities.

### ***Section 3:***

Election Procedures:

- (a) Nomination shall close at least one hour prior to the date of elections;
- (b) A list of nomination shall be announced immediately after the closing of nominations;
- (c) The Election Commissioner shall obtain a final list of eligible voters from the General Secretary prior to the date of election;
- (d) Votes shall be cast in person by eligible members by secret ballot;
- (e) Counting of ballots and declarations of winners shall be carried out by the Election Commissioner immediately after closing of the polls;
- (f) Election of the Society shall be held on last Sunday of February of the election year. **(Note: see Amendment)**

**Section 4:**

Tie Position:

In case a tie occurs in any position the Election Commissioner shall devise the way of drawing of lots.

**Section 5:**

Power of the Commissioner:

The decisions of the Election Commissioner shall be final in all matters concerning elections. **(Note: see Amendment)**

**ARTICLE X: Books, Records and Audit****Section 1:**

Books and Records:

The record of the Society shall consist of its Constitution, by-laws and amendments thereto, minutes of all meetings of the General Body and of the Executive Committee, register of members, financial documents, inventories and such other records as shall be designated from time to time by the Executive Committee.

**Section 2:**

Audit of accounts:

Before the closing of 2-yearly term of the Executive Committee, an audit committee comprising one or more members of the Society shall audit the books of account, to be presented by the Treasurer to the annual meeting of the members, and that the audit committee shall be appointed by the President of the Society with the approval of the Executive Committee.

**Section 3:**

The records of the Society shall be maintained in English and shall remain in custody of designated officers.

**ARTICLE XI: Amendment of These By-laws****Section 1:**

These by-laws may be amended by members at any annual meeting of the members, or if a notice of a proposal to amend these by-laws and the respect in which proposal to be amended is given in any call of a special meeting of the members at such meeting.

**Section 2:**

Twenty five percent of the members in good standing can initiate any amendment of these by-laws, which shall have to be notified to the General Secretary of the Society one week prior to special meeting and two weeks prior to the annual meeting in writing stating the portion of the by-laws to be amended.

**Section 3:**

The amendments must be approved by seventy five percent or greater vote of the members present as a quorum.

**Section 4:**

Amendment shall become effective immediately upon passage.

**ARTICLE XII: Dissolution of the Society****Section 1:**

Voluntary Dissolution:

In case of voluntary dissolution, assets and liabilities of the Society shall be determined and all the liabilities shall be paid for by the Society, balance remaining after payment of such liabilities shall be given as gift to a charitable organization as determined by the Executive Committee; provided, however, that voluntary dissolution shall not be carried out without the approval of three-fourths majority of the members of the Society present as a quorum in a special meeting of the members.

**AMENDMENTS (in various years since 2009)****ARTICLE VI: Meetings*****Section 1:***

Annual General Meeting:

(b) Time: The annual general meeting shall be held in the month of March of each year at a time convenient to the majority of the members of the Society. This meeting will be aligned with celebration of 'Independence Day' of Bangladesh.

**ARTICLE IX: Election*****Section 3:***

Election Procedures:

(f) Election of the Society shall be normally held on the annual general meeting date/day in March of the election year unless exceptional circumstances occur.

***Section 5:***

Power of the Election Commissioner:

At any exceptional circumstances, the Election Commissioner has the power to terminate the existing or outgoing Executive Committee and form a Convening or Ad Hoc Committee to run the activities of the Society until election is held for the new Executive Committee, as determined by the Election Commissioner. With the endorsement of the Election Commissioner, all records, assets, cash, bank accounts of the Society and every other charge shall be transferred to the custody of the Convening/Ad Hoc Committee immediately for smooth transition to the new Executive Committee upon election is held.

**ARTICLE III: Membership*****Section 6:***

Membership Period:

Annual membership period will coincide with the annual general meeting in March, that is 1 March to 28 February (29 February for leap year).

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**ARTICLE II: Goals and Objectives*****Section 1:***

To comply with the nonpolitical nature of the Cultural Society and to maintain community harmony, no General or Executive Member shall demonstrate his or her personal political and/or religious views in any activities of the Society. Any such attempt will end-up with immediate cancellation of his or her membership from the Society.

**ARTICLE V: Management of the Society*****Section 10:***

Meetings of the Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee may invite in the regular meetings at least one guest from the members of the Society, preferably Presidents of former Executive Committees.