







Proceedings
Seminar on

MITIGATING ECONOMIC FALLOUT OF MIDDLE EAST WAR IN BANGLADESH

08 April 2026

Organised by
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)









Proceedings
Seminar on

MITIGATING ECONOMIC FALLOUT OF MIDDLE EAST WAR IN BANGLADESH

08 April 2026

Organised by
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)



Published by
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)
1/46, Old Elephant Road (West of Ramna Police Station), Dhaka-1000,
Bangladesh.
Phone: (+88) (02) 9353808, 9336287, 8315808
Fax: 88-02-48312625
E-mail: info@biiss.org
Website: www.biiss.org

Design & Printed by
GraphNet Limited
95 Naya Paltan, Khan Tower
1st Floor, Dhaka-1000
Phone: 01715011303, 01602299022
E-mail: graphnet@gmail.com

Proceedings
Seminar on

Mitigating Economic Fallout of Middle East War in Bangladesh

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organised a Seminar on **'Mitigating Economic Fallout of Middle East War in Bangladesh'** on Wednesday, 08 April 2026 at the BIISS auditorium. **Major General A S M Ridwanur Rahman, awc, afwc, psc, G** Director General, BIISS, delivered the welcome address and the concluding remarks. **Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir,** Honourable Adviser, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was the Chief Guest.



There were three presenters at the Seminar. **Professor Dr Ijaz Hossain**, Chairman, ESTex Foundation, delivered a presentation on **'Energy Price, Sourcing and Strategic Reserve'**. **Mr Inamul Haq Khan**, Senior Vice President, BGMEA, presented on **'Trade and Market Diversification'**. **Dr Mahfuz Kabir,** Research Director, BIISS, delivered on **'Inflation, Macroeconomic Adjustment and Recovery'.**

There was a vibrant Open Discussion Session following the presentations. The Dialogue was participated by representatives from various ministries and government institutes, business bodies, think tanks, academia and media.



WELCOME REMARKS



Major General A S M Ridwanur Rahman, awc, afwc, psc, G
Director General, BIISS

Major General Ridwanur Rahman extended greetings to the Chief Guest, esteemed speakers and other distinguished guests, media representatives, and the audience. He noted that the seminar was being held at a time of profound geopolitical uncertainty, as the ongoing conflict in the Middle East had evolved beyond a regional security crisis into a systemic shock to the global economy with serious consequences. He observed that the recently declared two-week ceasefire could only be regarded as a temporary relief. Referring to media coverage, he mentioned that the situation had been described as one of 'cautious optimism,' indicating the need for preparedness in the face of potential resurgence or further deterioration of the conflict.

He highlighted that the escalating conflict had created a complex set of economic challenges for Bangladesh, exposing structural vulnerabilities across multiple domains, including energy security, trade logistics, and external sector stability. He added that recent studies predicted that Bangladesh could face moderate to significant economic stress if the conflict prolongs. He further remarked that the consequences were already visible.

Given this context, he stated that the seminar would not dwell extensively on the impacts of the crisis but would instead focus on mitigating its economic fallout. He emphasised that effective mitigation required a delicate policy balance, between maintaining fiscal discipline and protecting vulnerable sectors and populations, and between ensuring energy affordability and safeguarding long-term sustainability. He noted that these challenges underscored the need for informed, coordinated, and forward-looking policy responses.

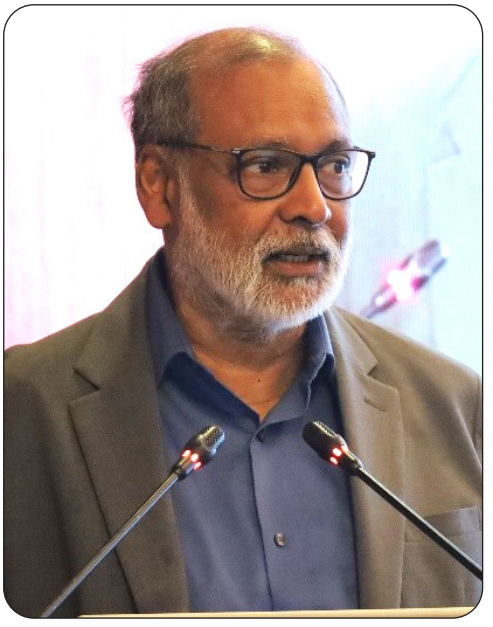
The Director General acknowledged that the Government of Bangladesh had already undertaken several immediate measures to manage the evolving situation, including energy conservation and rationing initiatives, efforts to secure alternative supply channels, and targeted support mechanisms for migrant workers. However, he stressed that addressing the crisis required more than short-term measures and called for a strategic shift from reactive crisis management to proactive resilience building.

He further observed that, despite its challenges, the crisis also presented an opportunity to reassess structural dependencies and to lay the foundation for a more resilient and adaptive economic model. In this regard, he described the seminar as both timely and essential, as it aimed to bring together diverse perspectives to examine the transmission channels of the crisis and to identify actionable strategies across key sectors.

He expressed sincere appreciation to the distinguished participants from government, industry, academia and the research community, noting that their presence reflected the urgency and national importance of the issue. He conveyed his confidence that the insights generated during the seminar would contribute to the formulation of a comprehensive policy framework for the government, addressing both immediate challenges and long-term transformation.



Presentation I
Energy Price, Sourcing and Strategic Reserve



Professor Dr Ijaz Hossain
Chairman, ESTex Foundation

Professor Dr Ijaz Hossain presented a comprehensive assessment of Bangladesh's contemporary energy landscape, with particular emphasis on energy sourcing, pricing vulnerabilities, and the strategic importance of establishing national energy reserves. While briefly outlining the broader context of Bangladesh's energy sector, he concentrated his discussion on the concept of strategic reserves, arguing that such a mechanism could substantially mitigate the kinds of disruptions currently experienced by the country, including fuel shortages, supply interruptions, and market instability.

At the outset, Professor Hossain highlighted Bangladesh's overwhelming dependence on fossil fuels. Referring to the country's energy profile for 2023–2024, he noted that renewable energy constitutes only around 2.3 per cent of the national energy mix, while approximately 97.7 per cent remains fossil-fuel based, of which nearly 56 per cent is imported. In his view, such dependence is environmentally unsustainable and economically burdensome, especially in the context of climate change and rising global energy prices. Although renewable energy could potentially emerge as a long-term solution, he stressed that Bangladesh remains heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels for meeting its growing energy demands.

Providing a historical overview of the gas sector, Professor Hossain observed that Bangladesh reached its peak domestic gas production during 2016–2017. Since then, local gas supply has steadily declined, necessitating increasing dependence on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) from 2018 onward to supplement depleting reserves. Despite LNG imports, Bangladesh continues to face a significant supply deficit, with roughly one-third of national demand reportedly remaining unmet. He cautioned that this widening gap between domestic production and consumption has created mounting pressure on industrial productivity and broader economic activity, as evidenced by reduced energy availability for industries and manufacturing sectors.

Drawing on international energy data, Professor Hossain underscored Bangladesh's growing dependence on imported energy. He illustrated how energy imports have risen considerably over the years, arguing that Bangladesh has transitioned into a heavily import-dependent economy, particularly for fossil fuels. At the same time, he pointed out an emerging concern that national energy consumption itself appears to be slowing, which, according to

him, may indicate weakening economic and industrial momentum due to constrained energy availability.

Turning to the issue of energy sourcing, Professor Hossain examined Bangladesh's reliance on specific geographical regions and markets for crude oil, refined petroleum products, LNG, and furnace oil. He explained that Bangladesh imports most of its crude oil from the Middle East. However, the country's refining capacity is constrained by the technological limitations of the Eastern Refinery Limited, which was originally established in 1967 and designed primarily to process light crude. Consequently, Bangladesh is compelled to import comparatively expensive grades of crude oil suitable for existing refining infrastructure. In the case of diesel and furnace oil, he observed that Bangladesh relies heavily on refining hubs such as Singapore and Malaysia. Nevertheless, he warned that these countries themselves remain dependent on imported crude and may be unable to guarantee supply during periods of global crisis or geopolitical instability.

Professor Hossain also highlighted the geopolitical dimensions of energy insecurity. He noted that international sanctions, such as restrictions on Russian and Iranian oil, alongside procurement requirements under Bangladesh's Public Procurement Rules (PPR), often complicate sourcing arrangements and reduce the country's flexibility in securing affordable energy supplies. Referring to recent developments in global LNG markets, he remarked that the United States has emerged as a major energy exporter due to advances in shale gas and shale oil extraction, thereby reshaping global energy trade patterns.

Discussing the economic implications of import dependency, Professor Hossain estimated that Bangladesh spent approximately US$ 13.2 billion on energy imports in 2024, including crude oil, LNG, LPG, coal and electricity imports. He further warned that heightened global price volatility and supply disruptions could require an additional US$ 5 billion in expenditure under crisis conditions. In this regard, he situated the energy crisis within Bangladesh's broader macroeconomic context, noting the country's persistent trade imbalance, substantial import burden, and growing pressure on foreign exchange reserves. According to his assessment, when recurring payments associated with the power and energy sector—including capacity payments and obligations to international energy companies—



are considered, Bangladesh requires nearly US$ 20 billion annually in foreign exchange to sustain the sector.

Against this backdrop, Professor Hossain strongly advocated for the establishment of a Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), describing it as a form of national insurance against supply disruptions and market volatility. He explained that strategic reserves are widely used internationally to safeguard economic stability, national security, and crisis response capacity. While strategic reserves may include food, medicines, currency, or critical minerals, petroleum reserves remain the most prominent form globally. Such reserves typically consist of stockpiles of crude oil, diesel, gasoline, and jet fuel, while some countries also maintain LNG and LPG reserves depending on their national requirements.

Drawing comparisons with global practices, Professor Hossain noted that countries adopt reserve strategies according to their national priorities. The United States maintains large reserves to stabilise global oil markets, China prioritises industrial security, Japan maintains extensive stockpiles because of near-total import dependence, and European Union member states collectively follow mandatory reserve requirements to ensure regional resilience. He particularly highlighted Japan's requirement of maintaining more than 200 days of stock as an example of preparedness for prolonged disruptions.

Acknowledging concerns regarding the financial burden of strategic reserves, Professor Hossain recognised that economists often criticise such measures due to their high opportunity costs. Significant investments are required to purchase and store large quantities of petroleum, potentially diverting resources away from sectors such as education or infrastructure. However, he argued that Bangladesh could still afford such reserves if managed strategically through a counter-cyclical approach. In his explanation, the government could procure crude oil when international prices are low and release reserves during periods of price spikes, thereby reducing market volatility while simultaneously generating financial savings. By purchasing at lower prices and avoiding costly emergency procurement during crises, Bangladesh could potentially reduce foreign exchange losses and stabilise domestic fuel markets.

Professor Hossain further argued that strategic reserves would strengthen the resilience of Bangladesh's refining sector. Maintaining adequate reserves could ensure uninterrupted operation of the Eastern Refinery Limited, particularly in light of the planned ERL-2 expansion project, which aims to substantially increase refining capacity by 2030. In addition, he estimated that Bangladesh could realise considerable savings by refining imported crude domestically rather than depending excessively on imported refined products such as diesel and octane.

Beyond strategic reserves, Professor Hossain outlined several long-term measures required to enhance Bangladesh's energy security. He stressed the need for vigorous gas exploration, proposing increased investment in exploratory drilling and institutional strengthening of national entities such as BAPEX. He suggested incentivising exploration through innovative financing mechanisms, including gas bonds, while also encouraging partnerships with experienced international operators capable of rapidly bringing new discoveries into production.

He also advocated a gradual restructuring of gas allocation priorities. In his view, domestic and compressed natural gas (CNG) consumption should be phased out over time, with natural gas increasingly prioritised for fertiliser production, power generation, and industries. Simultaneously, Bangladesh should improve energy efficiency, reduce system losses, curb theft and misuse, and accelerate renewable energy deployment.

In concluding his remarks, Professor Hossain emphasised the importance of long-term energy planning and diversification. He noted that countries such as China have partially insulated themselves from global fuel shocks through the rapid expansion of electric vehicles, while Pakistan has recently demonstrated remarkable progress in solar energy adoption through private sector and household-led initiatives. Drawing lessons from these experiences, he argued that Bangladesh must pursue a balanced and forward-looking energy strategy encompassing strategic reserves, expanded domestic exploration, energy efficiency, renewable energy growth, and careful fuel prioritisation to ensure long-term economic resilience and national energy security.



Presentation II
Trade and Market Diversification



Inamul Haq Khan
Senior Vice President
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

Mr Inamul Haq Khan commenced his address by acknowledging the preceding discussion on Bangladesh's energy landscape as both insightful and deeply concerning. He observed that the country is currently confronting a challenging and uncertain energy situation, one that necessitates immediate and pragmatic solutions. Reflecting on recent global developments, he noted that after a period marked by heightened uncertainty, the international community has been reminded that diplomatic engagement can still play a decisive role in restoring peace and stability. In this context, he characterised the recent ceasefire between the United States and Iran as a significant and welcome development, offering cautious optimism for global stability.

He situated his remarks within a broader historical juncture, describing the present moment as pivotal, shaped by uncertainty and rapid geopolitical shifts that have tested the resilience of economies worldwide, including Bangladesh. While the ceasefire has introduced a degree of stability into global energy markets and revived hopes for longer-term peace, he emphasised that the economic repercussions of the conflict continue to unfold. As such, he framed his discussion around trade and market diversification, identifying it as a critical strategy for navigating the evolving global environment.

Mr Khan underscored that the recent Middle Eastern conflict transcended conventional geopolitical tensions and evolved into a full-scale energy crisis with far-reaching global economic consequences. Although the ceasefire has helped to stabilise key maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, he cautioned that the volatility experienced in recent weeks has exposed the fragility of global supply chains. He warned that disruptions to energy supplies and logistics networks could persist for an extended period, potentially lasting months or even years. For Bangladesh, he argued, the crisis has struck at the core of its economic structure due to its heavy dependence on imported fuel and energy.

Elaborating on the domestic implications, he highlighted that Bangladesh's industrial base, particularly the RMG sector, is highly energy-intensive and therefore acutely vulnerable to fluctuations in global energy markets. Even short-term disruptions, he explained, have led

to increased production costs, higher transportation expenses, rising inflation, and a decline in international competitiveness. He further noted that the crisis propagated through multiple transmission channels, including disruptions in critical trade corridors such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea, Suez Canal route, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The potential closure of these strategic chokepoints, even if temporary, posed significant risks to global trade flows and energy supplies.

Mr Khan pointed out that freight costs had already risen by approximately 30 to 40 per cent, while volatility in fuel supply has adversely affected power generation, industrial operations, and transportation systems. Despite the ceasefire, he stressed that these disruptions do not dissipate immediately, as the crisis has manifested as a compounded shock encompassing energy, trade, and logistics. He further highlighted that prices of petroleum-based inputs used extensively in the RMG sector have increased by around 30 per cent, raising concerns about potential supply shortages. Given that a substantial portion of fabrics and accessories in the RMG industry are derived from petroleum products, the sector faces heightened vulnerability.

While acknowledging Bangladesh's remarkable economic progress, including export earnings of approximately US$ 48.28 billion with over 81 per cent contributed by the RMG sector, Mr Khan argued that such success also reveals structural weaknesses. Chief among these is the heavy concentration of export markets in the European Union and the United States, which together account for approximately 70 to 80 per cent of total exports. Additionally, the country remains highly dependent on imported energy and raw materials. Recent disruptions, he noted, have already slowed export momentum, with RMG export growth declining to around 5.51 per cent in fiscal year 2025–26 and experiencing a sharp contraction of 19.35 per cent in March. He characterised this trend as alarming, particularly in light of the competitive advances made by countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia.

He further illustrated the gravity of the situation by citing export figures, which fell to US$ 28.57 billion during the July–March period of fiscal year 2025-26, compared to US$ 30.25 billion during the same period in the previous fiscal year. This decline, he argued, reflects a broader risk trajectory that persists despite the ceasefire. He articulated a clear causal chain: energy crises lead to higher production costs; higher costs erode competitiveness; and reduced competitiveness results in lower export demand. Although geopolitical tensions may have temporarily eased, global markets remain cautious, and a full recovery in demand is likely to take time.

Against this backdrop, Mr Khan asserted that diversification has become more urgent than ever. He emphasised that stability can no longer be assumed, and that Bangladesh must instead prepare for continued volatility. Market diversification, in his view, is essential and should prioritise expansion into regions such as Asia including Japan, China, and India, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Simultaneously, he advocated for product diversification, urging a strategic shift from basic garments to higher-value segments such as man-made fibre apparel, technical textiles, and sustainable products, which offer improved margins and greater resilience.



He also highlighted the critical importance of supply chain resilience and energy security, arguing that the recent crisis has reinforced the intrinsic link between energy security and economic stability. To this end, he called for diversification of energy sourcing, strengthening of backward linkage industries, and the development of strategic energy reserves. In terms of trade policy, he stressed the urgency of preparing for Bangladesh's graduation from LDC status by accelerating the negotiation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Preferential Trage Agreements (PTAs), alongside forging strategic global partnerships.

Turning to logistics, Mr Khan identified it as a strategic priority, noting that even brief disruptions have demonstrated that logistics infrastructure is now a critical battleground for competitiveness. He highlighted the centrality of Chittagong Port, which handles approximately 94 to 95 per cent of the country's trade, while Mongla Port accounts for the remaining share. Despite some recent improvements in performance, he observed that the port's overall efficiency remains comparatively low on a global scale. Enhancing port efficiency and developing alternative trade routes, particularly those less vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions, were identified by him as key imperatives.

Mr Khan further emphasised the role of the private sector in driving adaptation and resilience. He called for increased investment in innovation and advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence and digital applications, to enhance productivity and competitiveness. While acknowledging Bangladesh's progress in compliance, sustainability, and circularity within the RMG sector, he stressed the need to maintain and strengthen these standards. He also underscored the urgency of adopting digital supply chains at a faster pace,

noting that competitors such as India, Vietnam, and Cambodia are already making significant advancements in this domain.

In addition, he highlighted the importance of developing globally recognised Bangladeshi brands. While local brands exist, he argued that their reach remains limited, and that establishing strong global brands is essential for ensuring long-term export stability and market positioning. He encapsulated his core message by framing diversification as fundamentally a strategy of risk management, particularly in a global context where geopolitical dynamics increasingly shape economic outcomes and uncertainty has become the prevailing norm.

In concluding his address, Mr Khan reiterated that Bangladesh stands at a critical crossroads as a growing economy and an emerging global manufacturing hub that is simultaneously exposed to external shocks. While the recent ceasefire offers a measure of hope, it also serves as a reminder that uncertainty is an enduring feature of the global system. He emphasised that reliance on limited markets and resources creates vulnerability, whereas diversification fosters resilience. He closed with the observation that in a world where conflicts can disrupt markets with little warning, those who prepare during periods of relative stability will be best positioned to lead in times of uncertainty.

Presentation III
Inflation, Macroeconomic Adjustment, and Recovery



Dr Mahfuz Kabir
Research Director, BIISS

Dr Mahfuz Kabir presented an overview of the global economic implications of the ongoing Middle East conflict and its likely consequences for Bangladesh, along with key policy recommendations. He noted that the most immediate global impact of the conflict has been the disruption of energy supplies. The instability surrounding the Strait of Hormuz has significantly affected the movement of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG), disrupting approximately 15 per cent of global oil supply—and around 20 per cent of LNG shipments. Qatar's LNG production has declined considerably (17 per cent), creating challenges for countries heavily dependent on Middle Eastern energy imports. For Bangladesh, this poses a significant concern, as a large share of its LNG imports traditionally comes from Qatar. To mitigate the risk, Bangladesh has begun diversifying its energy sources, including increased procurement from Australia.

Dr Kabir highlighted that the resulting rise in global energy prices is expected to contribute to higher inflation worldwide, affecting both developed and developing economies. While ongoing peace negotiations offer hope for a diplomatic resolution, uncertainty remains. He informed that if the conflict persists, global GDP growth could decline by approximately 1.4 per cent, with Europe facing particular difficulties due to its dependence on imported energy. The conflict is also expected to disrupt agricultural production through shortages of fertilisers, many of which originate from Middle Eastern producers. This could adversely affect food-producing nations across Asia and increase global food prices.

Turning to energy markets, Dr Kabir observed that oil prices had experienced significant volatility, surging during periods of heightened tension before showing signs of moderation following announcements of peace initiatives. Noting that Bangladesh has already secured some energy imports at elevated prices he expressed caution about continuing cost pressure on the country even in the case of decline in international prices.

He acknowledged the government's efforts to prevent panic and maintain energy security through timely procurement of oil and LNG. These measures have helped stabilise

fuel availability and reduce public anxiety. However, because energy was acquired at relatively high costs, adjustments in domestic energy prices may become unavoidable, potentially fueling further inflation. The increase in shipping costs and bunker fuel prices is another major concern, according to Dr Kabir. International organisations, including the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and OECD, have warned that the conflict could weaken global growth through supply chain disruptions, rising unemployment, and economic instability. Asia, which has emerged as a key engine of global growth, is particularly vulnerable to these shocks.

Dr Kabir explained that modern production systems rely heavily on fragmented global supply chains. Disruptions in one region can therefore affect manufacturing and trade worldwide. Major financial institutions have already revised downward their growth forecasts, while fertiliser shortages, aviation disruptions, and reduced industrial activity continue to create additional pressures. The aviation sector has been especially affected, with thousands of flight cancellations occurring daily. Given the Middle East's role as a major international air transit hub, these disruptions carry substantial economic costs and may contribute to rising unemployment across multiple industries.



Speaking about Bangladesh, Dr Kabir noted that inflation has shown a slight decline in recent months, according to official statistics. However, he cautioned that upcoming adjustments to fuel, gas, and electricity prices are likely to reverse this trend. Rising import costs for raw materials, food products, and industrial inputs are already pressuring domestic production costs. Several imported industrial inputs have seen dramatic price increases, including chemicals, polyester filament yarn, and plastic resins. These rising costs are eroding the competitiveness of local industries and contributing to broader inflationary pressures. Overseas employment has also been affected. Bangladesh has seen a decline in labour migration, particularly to Middle Eastern destinations such as Saudi Arabia. While remittance inflows recently reached record levels, partly due to seasonal factors and precautionary

transfers, future remittance performance remains uncertain if economic conditions in host countries deteriorate.

Dr Kabir emphasised that reconstruction efforts following a successful peace process could create new employment opportunities for Bangladeshi workers. Therefore, retaining the current overseas workforce and preparing skilled labour for future demand should remain a national priority. Regarding economic growth, he projected that Bangladesh's GDP growth could slow to 3.03 per cent over the next two years due to the conflict. Higher energy costs, weaker exports, and reduced investment activity may contribute to this slowdown. He added that the financial sector also faces considerable risks. Banks, insurance companies, and other financial institutions are deeply connected to industrial production and trade. If businesses struggle or close because of rising costs and declining demand, non-performing loans could increase, placing additional strain on an already vulnerable banking system. Foreign direct investment may also be delayed as multinational corporations adopt a cautious approach amid global uncertainty. Investors are likely to wait for greater stability before committing new capital.



On the external sector, Dr Kabir warned that higher import costs and weaker export performance could put pressure on Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves. He suggested that policymakers consider strengthening regulatory measures on non-essential imports, particularly products that can be produced domestically, to conserve foreign currency. The labour market presents another challenge. Rising production costs may lead to job losses in manufacturing, agriculture, and services. A prolonged conflict could also trigger the return of overseas workers, creating additional employment pressures within the domestic economy. Dr Kabir stressed that inflation remains the greatest burden on low-income households. As

living costs continue to rise, poverty reduction efforts may face significant setbacks. Protecting vulnerable populations must therefore remain a central policy priority.

In concluding his presentation, Dr Kabir outlined several key policy recommendations:

1. Maintain Energy Support Measures: Continue targeted energy subsidies while pursuing gradual sector reforms to avoid worsening inflationary pressures.
2. Adopt Flexible Monetary Policies: Consider reducing policy lending rates and ensuring adequate liquidity to support businesses, particularly in the manufacturing sector.
3. Expand Social Protection Programs: Strengthen food support initiatives and continue programs such as family assistance cards, farmer support schemes, and rural employment initiatives.
4. Support Export-Oriented Industries: Provide targeted assistance to export sectors, particularly the ready-made garments industry, through affordable financing and supportive policy measures.
5. Strengthen Regional Energy Cooperation: Deepen energy connectivity and cooperation with neighbouring countries to improve long-term energy security.
6. Prepare for Post-Conflict Labour Demand: Establish a high-level task force involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment to position Bangladesh as a leading source of labour for future reconstruction and development projects in the Middle East.

Dr Kabir concluded by emphasising that while the conflict presents significant risks, it also creates opportunities. With prudent policies, strategic planning, and proactive engagement, Bangladesh can mitigate the adverse impacts while positioning itself to benefit from future economic recovery and reconstruction efforts.

OPEN DISCUSSION



Ambassador Mahbub Uz Zaman

Former Secretary and Ambassador of Bangladesh to China

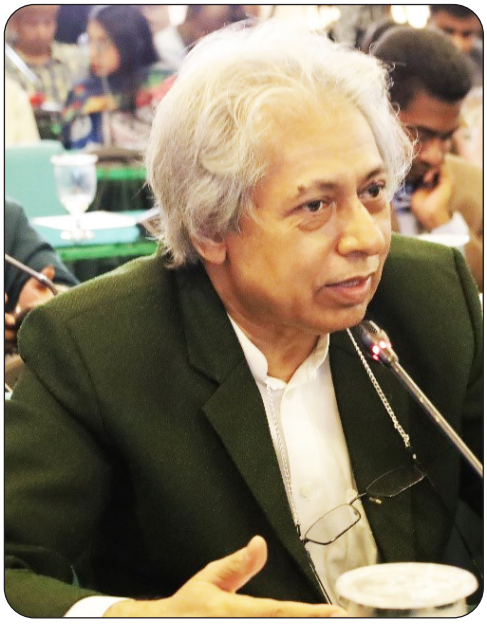
Ambassador Mahbub Uz Zaman focused on longer-term solutions to the crisis. Drawing on his experience as the ambassador of Bangladesh to China, he noted that Beijing maintains a long-term energy hedging strategy through strategic petroleum reserve, an approach that Dr Ijaz had also suggested. He expressed full agreement with that proposition and stressed its implementation. He further recommended that the import of electric vehicles (EVs) should be quickly levied with reduced import duties. Noting that the previous duty structure had been prohibitively high, he proposed that the EV duty cut be included in the next budget, as wider EV adoption would help reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels.

On renewable energy, Ambassador Mahbub acknowledged Dr Ijaz's remarks regarding Pakistan's progress in solar panel deployment, with much of the equipment sourced from China, one of the world's leading producers. He proposed that Bangladesh should seek deeper linkages with China in this sector as part of a long-term strategy to reduce fossil fuel dependence.

Reflecting on his tenure in Beijing, he highlighted China's success in waste-to-energy recycling. He recalled that certain agreements had been initiated during his posting but had not reached any major steps. He expressed the view that this remained a highly promising area for bilateral cooperation.

He responded to Dr Mahfuz Kabir's observation that inflation had eased, but there was no sense of complacency. He noted that the rate of decline was itself slowing down when compared with previous months and stressed the need for continued vigilance through monetary and policy issues. Ambassador Mahbub also expressed concerns regarding the Eastern Refinery Limited. He pointed out that its capacity constraints required an urgent diversification of fuel sources.

Finally, he enquired: given that Bangladesh imports approximately 17 per cent of its LNG from the United States, whether there was scope for a bilateral purchase agreement that could secure supply at a more reduced price.



M S Siddiqui

Legal Economist and CEO, Bangla Chemical

M S Siddiqui expressed appreciation to Dr Mahfuz Kabir for his detailed account of the state of the economy and the potential impact of the conflict on fuel supply chains. He also acknowledged Mr Inam's suggestion that business models be diversified to address such vulnerabilities. He drew particular attention to a point raised by Professor Ijaz regarding the establishment of buffer stocks, especially at the private-sector and individual levels and cited Japan as a successful example of this approach.

He noted that the government was unable to hold stockpiles beyond 40 to 45 days, and argued that the private sector should be permitted to import energy on its own account. However, he acknowledged that this presented a policy challenge since energy in Bangladesh is subsidised. He remarked that while it is straightforward for the government to administer subsidies on its own imports, extending such subsidies to private-sector importers would create a conflict with the existing import policy. He suggested a gradual reduction of subsidies and a shift towards a market-based system for energy imports and distribution.

As a precedent, he recalled that the domestic airline industry had previously been disadvantaged by government-supplied highly priced fuel, and had accordingly sought permission to import fuel independently. He recommended that the government give serious consideration to allowing private entities to import and stockpile fuel.

Ambassador Mosud Mannan

Former Ambassador of Bangladesh



Ambassador Mosud Mannan focused on two issues. The first was labour market diversification. He argued that Bangladesh should not remain solely dependent on the Middle East for overseas employment and noted that Africa represented a substantial untapped opportunity. Drawing on his own experience of having served as ambassador to several countries in the Middle East, West Asia, and Africa, he observed that several countries had expressed a keen interest in recruiting Bangladeshi workers. He cited Mali specifically, a country large in territory but low in population, as one that had expressed willingness to receive Bangladeshi labour.

He added that Uganda was already doing so, and that other neighbouring African states offered similar potential. He concluded that Africa could serve as a gradual and expandable replacement for the Middle Eastern labour market.

His second point concerned renewable energy. Whilst acknowledging Pakistan's success in this domain, he recalled that as far back as 30 years ago, during his posting in China, Beijing had already expressed eagerness to collaborate with Bangladesh on developing its renewable energy sector. Given the current government's strong relations with China, he urged that this opportunity be actively pursued, leveraging Chin's scale economy and global leadership in renewable energy.



Md Mazadul Hoque

Chairman, Policy Think & Economic Research Center (PTERC)

Md Mazadul Hoque noted that countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and China had made notable progress in renewable energy, and asked Dr Ijaz what the current government's strategy was in this regard. He recalled that a previous government had launched a 500-megawatt solar power programme covering the period 2012 to 2016, as well as a broader power system master plan, but noted that neither initiative had come to fruition.

He also raised the issue of Bay of Bengal industrial growth belt at Matarbari, which had been planned as a fuel hub but was facing geopolitical complications arising from the involvement of Japanese investment and China's reported reservations about the project. On the issue of migrant labourers, he noted that the reconstruction of Middle Eastern countries in the post-conflict period would create significant demand for skilled workers, and enquired what strategy the government had in mind to ensure that Bangladeshi workers were adequately prepared to seize these opportunities.



Major General Jiban Kanai Das (Retd)

Former Director General

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)

Major General Jiban Kanai Das (Retd) expressed strong agreement with Mr Inamul Haq Khan's framing of uncertainty as the new normal. He pointed to the succession of recent conflicts like the war in Ukraine, followed by the Israel-Hamas war and the broader Middle East conflict as evidence that the timing of such conflicts is uncertain. He urged adopting a more forward-looking perspective rather than focusing solely on the immediate crisis.

Regarding energy, he supported Dr Ijaz's call to intensify domestic exploration, specifically mentioning the need to connect the Bhola gas field to the national grid. On clean energy, he highlighted Bangladesh's substantial investment in the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and called for its expeditious completion, which would add 2,500 megawatts to the national grid.

He also raised the issue of food security, noting that the disruption in fertiliser supply chains was an underappreciated consequence of the conflict. Reduced fertiliser availability would directly hit domestic food production, and he called for a strategic food reserve to be developed alongside the petroleum reserve to increase agricultural output.

Gazi A K M Fazlul Haque

Director General, Research and Policy

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)

Gazi A K M Fazlul Haque aligned himself with the proposals already put forward and reiterated the importance of accelerating the establishment of solar energy infrastructure. He also called for the rapid exploration of domestic oil and gas blocks and expressed concern that these blocks had not been adequately explored in the past. He stressed the urgency of investing in the country's own energy resources.





Dr Syeda Sultana Razia

Member, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) and

Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET)

Dr Syeda Sultana Razia stated that crises create opportunities. First of all, she observed that measures which are difficult to implement in ordinary times such as establishing strategic reserves become more feasible during periods of acute pressure, and expressed cautious optimism that the current crisis might serve as a catalyst for reform.

Her second point concerned budgetary priorities. She noted that in the previous governments' budgets, the allocation to the energy sector represented less than 10 per cent of the allocation to power generation. Dr Razia also highlighted that energy had not been given commensurate importance. She called for greater budgetary allocation to the energy sector and urged a better understanding of its strategic necessity.

Her third point concerned the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. She observed that energy master plans and forecasts frequently omit Rooppur's projected output from their calculations. She noted that fuel loading, which had been scheduled to commence on 7 April, had been delayed and expressed uncertainty about whether the timeline would slip further into 2026 or 2027. She also highlighted a structural coordination issue. Rooppur falls under the Ministry of Science and Technology, whilst energy planning is led by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division and the Power Division. She called for clearer integration between these bodies, noting that if the plant's 1,200 megawatts had already been operational, LNG could have been substantially saved.

Her final point addressed fertilizer production. She noted that the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) had increasingly prioritized imports over domestic production over the past few decades. This trend resulted in the closure of major manufacturing plants over the 17 years. She argued that this approach was financially illogical because even when factories are not operational, their fixed overhead costs persist. Operating them, even on imported LNG, would therefore yield net savings compared to direct fertilizer imports, since the overhead must be incurred regardless. She warned that as the Aman harvest season approached and the conflict continued, both LNG-based domestic production and direct imports could face simultaneous strain, and called for the matter to be taken seriously.



Dr Foyasal Khan

Founder & CEO, Policy House (PH), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Adjunct Faculty, Department of Economics, Southeast University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dr Foyasal Khan drew attention to the market distortions that had emerged in Bangladesh during the crisis. He noted phenomena such as panic buying and black-market fuel and called on the government to develop concrete mechanisms to address these market failures.

He also observed how a geographically distant war could generate systemic global economic shocks. He proposed that Bangladesh take an active role in building international consensus to prevent or mitigate such disruptions in the future, and asked how the government intended to pursue this objective at the multilateral level.

Major General (Retd) Md Nazrul Islam

Executive Member (Planning & Development)
Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA)



Major General (Retd) Md Nazrul Islam raised four points. First, he proposed the establishment of a National Security and Economic Council, distinct from the existing National Security Council. The proposed council would address non-military security dimensions including food security, energy security, and labour. Second, he urged consideration of the privatisation of petroleum refining operations, arguing that doing so could reduce the fiscal burden on the government associated with maintaining the energy sector. Third, drawing on his role representing the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), he expressed concern about the cancellation of captive power licence, which had placed genuine investors in serious difficulty. He suggested that those investors who had not exploited such licence but had instead used them to create jobs and attract investment, should be given an opportunity. Fourth, he called for the development of a comprehensive, app-based national energy database that would enable the public to access real-time information on energy availability and distribution across the country, whilst allowing sensitive national security information to be withheld.



Dr Tabassum Zaman

Professor, Department of Economics
Jagannath University

Dr Tabassum Zaman noted that conflicts, while destructive, invariably generate opportunities. She stated that Bangladesh had, by and large, been reactive rather than proactive in its crisis response. She cited Pakistan's austerity measures as a benchmark, including a 50 per cent work-from-home policy, a shift to online education, and a 25 per cent salary reduction for high-income earners.

She raised the issue of income inequality, noting that whilst GDP growth in recent years had been commendable, the distributional aspect remained a pressing concern and would need to be addressed by comprehensive macroeconomic response. Dr Zaman also proposed exploring barter trade arrangements with regional partners as a means of mitigating the impact of rising shipping insurance premiums and supply chain disruptions.

Ambassador Mashfee Binte Shams

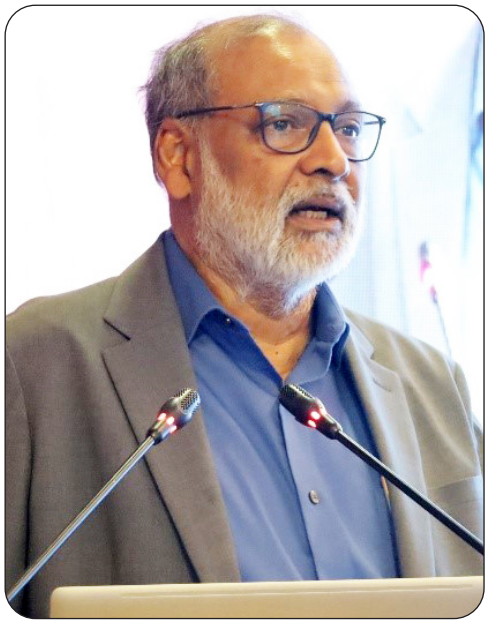
Former Rector, Foreign Service Academy



Ambassador Mashfee Binte Shams brought renewed attention to the issue of export reduction and the dual challenge of export and market diversification. She acknowledged that signing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) had been recommended as a means of strengthening Bangladesh's export position. However, drawing on her own experience in negotiating several such agreements, she noted that Bangladesh was internally divided on the question. A significant school of thought believed that reducing import duties would have a damaging fiscal impact. Ambassador Mashfee added that the Ministry of Commerce had found it difficult to make a persuasive case that the wealth generated by increased exports would adequately offset that loss.

She pointed that this issue would become critical once Bangladesh graduated from least developed country (LDC) status, at which point preferential market access would no longer be an option. Rather than continuing to make vague recommendations, she called for a clear policy decision on whether Bangladesh intended to remain reliant on import duties for revenue generation, or whether it would commit to an aggressively export-oriented economic model capable of generating the fiscal space needed to sustain growth.

Response from the Panelist



Professor Dr Ijaz Hossain
Chairman, ESTex Foundation
Prominent Energy and Sustainable Development Expert, Bangladesh

Professor Dr Ijaz Hossain informed that two programmes were underway regarding gas exploration - a 50-well programme and a 100-well programme. Both of these programmes have been initiated under the previous Awami League government, continued under the interim administration, and were ongoing under the current government. He expressed concern, however, that despite considerable rhetorical emphasis, tangible results had been limited. He noted that of the five or six truly exploratory wells that had been drilled, none had yielded. He clarified that the majority of wells in the 50-well programme were work-over or appraisal wells rather than genuine exploratory wells, though the new 100-well programme included a greater number of exploratory wells. He also noted that the government appeared to be close to opening both onshore and offshore drilling, with offshore deep-water exploration being of particular strategic importance, given that two previous attempts had failed and a third was now being prepared with greater care.

On renewable energy, he noted that the previous government had announced a 300-megawatt rooftop solar programme but had failed to materialise before leaving office, and that the new government had yet to make any formal announcement in this space. He acknowledged that significant activity was taking place in this sector but cautioned that renewable energy deployment requires substantial investment.

Dr Ijaz contrasted Bangladesh's situation with Pakistan's, noting that in Pakistan the shift to solar had been largely private-sector driven, propelled by chronic load-shedding that forced households and businesses to act independently. He observed that Bangladesh's high urban density and flat-dwelling culture presented structural barriers to rooftop solar uptake, since questions of roof ownership and shared building access remained unresolved. He concluded that, despite numerous seminars on the subject, no comprehensive answer to Bangladesh's renewable energy inertia had emerged, and expressed the view that the current crisis presented a critical opportunity that should not be wasted.

SPEECH BY THE CHIEF GUEST



Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir
Honourable Adviser, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir reflected that to him, the occasion felt like a homecoming, having participated in numerous discussions, critiques, and debates in the same venue in the past. He emphasised that the topic under discussion was of undeniable importance. As the global context had already been covered, Dr Titumir chose instead to focus on raising five key questions, stressing that it is the responsibility of a government to ask the right questions in order to derive meaningful answers.

The first question he raised was whether Bangladesh had ever seriously considered energy security. While discussions on the issue had existed on paper for some time, including within frameworks such as the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), he argued that no real energy security had been inherited. On the contrary, existing capacity had declined. He recalled celebratory claims about electrification projects but questioned the absence of concrete indicators of energy security comparable to buffer stock measures used in food security. He pointed out that earlier, Eastern Refinery could ensure approximately 30 days of supply security, which had now fallen to 17 days. Despite substantial subsidies in the energy sector, estimated at around 60,000 crore taka, there remained no clear benchmark or reserve. He highlighted that such fundamental questions had not been raised prior to the current government.

Dr Titumir stressed that energy security must be defined quantitatively, with clear benchmarks for reserves of petrol, octane, diesel and coal. Although numerous master plans existed, there was no clarity regarding essential requirements. He briefly acknowledged the weakened economic conditions inherited by the government but did not elaborate, noting that the audience was already aware.

Turning to external challenges, he referred to an ongoing crisis described as a war, which the government was attempting to overcome. A key difference from previous administrations, he noted, was the presence of accountability. Earlier governments could adjust prices or subsidies arbitrarily, whereas a democratic and accountable government could not act in such a manner. He questioned the rationale for price increases under conditions of accountability.

Dr Titumir described inheriting an economy characterised by persistent inflation above 10 per cent, stagnant employment and contracting growth, with growth falling to around 3 per cent in the most recent quarter. He emphasised that the government would not deviate from historical or economic realities.

Drawing on historical precedent, he recalled the oil crisis of the 1970s, which Bangladesh had transformed into an opportunity. During the tenure of President Ziaur Rahman, despite predictions of a balance of payments crisis, surplus labour was strategically exported to Middle Eastern economies experiencing capital surpluses. This pragmatic approach, rather than theoretical pessimism, helped mitigate the crisis. He argued that Bangladesh's history demonstrated an ability to convert crises into opportunities.



He further observed that governments in Bangladesh had often assumed office during periods of crisis. Following independence, the country faced famine and devastation but became a viable state under Ziaur Rahman. After the fall of an autocratic regime, Begum Khaleda Zia assumed leadership and undertook significant economic modernisation. During her tenure, approximately 20 million people were lifted out of poverty, marking a record in South Asia. Female participation in the formal labour market increased significantly, the economy underwent structural transformation with greater industrial contribution to GDP, cereal production tripled, ready made garment exports surpassed one billion dollars, and a welfare oriented rural economy was developed.

Providing current data, he noted existing fuel stocks and incoming supplies across diesel, octane and petrol. He highlighted concerns about the gas sector's dependence on imports, suggesting that policy and legal frameworks had enabled this dependence. LNG prices had risen sharply, from $ 10 to $ 21 per barrel. He also referred to daily demand figures for octane and electricity, noting that peak summer electricity demand could reach 15,000 megawatts.

Dr Titumir outlined a phased approach to energy management, beginning with emergency response, followed by medium term planning to build energy security. He

advocated for an energy mix, including gradual reduction of fossil fuel dependence while ensuring supply stability. Renewable energy could not be adopted abruptly but required a balanced transition.

On nuclear energy, he noted delays in expected electricity generation from the Rooppur project. He explained that the government was pursuing a three pronged strategy, diversifying energy sources, securing financing and managing prices. Financing had been arranged through multiple channels, including multilateral institutions, trade finance mechanisms and organisations such as the Islamic Development Bank, IFC, IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and AIIB. He also acknowledged the constraints of inherited debt and the need to consider interest rates and repayment terms carefully.

Regarding price adjustments, he noted that while economic principles justified aligning domestic prices with global trends, the current context of high inflation, stagnant real wages and rising unemployment required caution. He argued that accountable governments must balance economic necessity with social impact.

Dr Titumir observed that crises tend to have disproportionate effects, particularly under accountable governance. He referred to discussions on production networks and supply chain disruptions, suggesting that key themes likely included diversification, competitiveness and productivity growth. Despite discussions on LDC graduation and transition strategies, dependency and concentration had increased.

To address this, he identified five priority sectors for diversification, agriculture and agro processing, pharmaceuticals, leather and leather goods, light engineering and ICT. He cited recent economic census data indicating a decline in industrial contribution and an increase in factory closures, emphasising that the government did not manipulate statistics.

Looking ahead, Dr Titumir discussed the potential of northern Bangladesh, identifying four types of surplus, crops such as maize and potatoes, fruits including mango and litchi, flowers such as tulips and dairy products. He noted emerging initiatives such as mozzarella cheese production in Thakurgaon and ongoing efforts to further develop these sectors.

He remarked that the achievements of earlier administrations, particularly in poverty reduction, were often underappreciated due to the absence of rhetorical politics. He contrasted this with previous emphasis on symbolic projects, the consequences of which were now being experienced.

He also referred to monetary policy measures by Bangladesh Bank to stabilise imports and developments in the LPG sector. In terms of macroeconomic management, the government has aimed to maintain foreign exchange reserves at around 30 billion dollars and ensure coordination between fiscal and monetary authorities without interference. Institutional independence, particularly of the central bank, has been highlighted as a priority. Regarding energy supply, measures had already been taken to ensure uninterrupted imports, although capacity and reserves remained limited. Efforts are underway, including financing arrangements for Eastern Refinery 2 through the Islamic Development Bank, with the aim of accelerating progress. After discussing the measures taken by the government, he concluded by emphasising the importance of proper implementation of the measures taken.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR



Major General A S M Ridwanur Rahman, awc, afwc, psc, G
Director General, BIISS

In his concluding remarks, **Major General A S M Ridwanur Rahman** thanked all the panellists and participants in the Open Discussion session for sharing their valuable insights. He summarised the findings of the presentations which emphasised market diversification, trade diversification, digital supply chains, energy subsidies, and energy hedging strategies. However, he also mentioned that while such measures were easy to propose, they were difficult to implement within a concrete action plan when faced with contradicting or conflicting priority requirements. Finally, he shared his optimism that the insights generated during the seminar would help formulate a comprehensive policy framework for the government.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chief Editor
A S M Ridwanur Rahman
Director General

Editor
Dr Mahfuz Kabir
Research Director

Assistant Editors
Dr Benuka Ferdousi, Senior Research Fellow
Md Jahan Shoieb, Research Fellow
Nur Ahmed, Research Fellow
Muhammad Mazedul Haque, Research Officer

The Editorial Team thankfully acknowledges Research Interns **Faria Islam, Mahmud Shikda**r and **Miftahul Zannat** for their assistance in preparing the proceedings.

BIISS Publications

- **Books**

  South Asian Regional Cooperation: A Socio–economic Approach to Peace and Stability
  Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect
  The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace
  The Security of Small States
  ASEAN Experiences of Regional and Inter-regional Cooperation: Relevance for SAARC
  Development, Politics and Security: Third World Context
  Bangladesh and SAARC: Issues, Perspectives and Outlook
  Bangladesh: Society Polity and Economy
  South Asia's Security: Primacy of Internal Dimension
  Chandabaji Versus Entrepreneurship: Youth Force in Bangladesh
  Development Cooperation at the Dawn of the Twenty First Century: Bangladesh-German Partnership in Perspective
  Conflict Management and Sub-regional Co-operation in ASEAN: Relevance of SAARC
  National Security of Bangladesh in the 21st Century
  Civil Society and Democracy in Bangladesh
  Regional Co-operation in South Asia: New Dimensions and Perspectives
  Confidence Building Measures and Security Cooperation in South Asia : Challenges in the New Century
  Bangladesh-Southeast Asia Relations: Some Insights
  Security in the Twenty First Century: A Bangladesh Perspective
  25 Years of BIISS: An Anthology
  Politics and Security in South Asia: Salience of Religion and Culture
  Small States and Regional Stability in South Asia
  Religious Militancy and Security in South Asia
  Global War on Terror: Bangladesh Perspective
  Towards BIMSTEC-Japan Comprehensive Economic Cooperation: Bangladesh Perspective Democracy
  Governance and Security Reforms: Bangladesh Context
  Whither National Security Bangladesh 2007
  National Security Bangladesh 2008
  Human Security Approach to Counter Extremism in South Asia: Relevance of Japanese Culture
  National Security Bangladesh 2009
  Energy Security in South Asia Plus: Relevance of Japanese Experience
  Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy
  Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Discourses from Japan and Beyond
  Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: An Epic of a Nation's Emergence and Emancipation
  Militancy and National Security of Bangladesh: Policy Options and Strategic Outlook
  Glimpses on Bangladesh: A Country of Hope, Love, Courage and Resilience
  Developmet-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas
  Look Africa: Exploring New Horizons For Bangladesh

BIISS Publications

- **South Asia Human Security Series**

  Nepali State, Society and Human Security : An Infinite Discourse
  Evolving Security Discourse in Sri Lanka: From National Security to Human Security
  Violence, Terrorism and Human Security in South Asia
  Women and Human Security in South Asia: The Cases of Bangladesh and Pakistan
  Human Security in India: Health, Shelter and Marginalisation
  Pakistan: Haunting Shadows of Human Security
  Human Security in India: Discourse, Practices and Policy Implications
  Human Security Index for South Asia: Exploring Relevant Issues
  Ethnicity and Human Security in Bangladesh and Pakistan

  BIISS Papers (Monograph series)

  The Assam Tangle : Outlook for the Future (1984)
  The Crisis in Lebanon: Multi-dimensional Aspects and Outlook for the Future (1985)
  India's Policy Fundamentals, Neighbours and Post-Indira Developments (1985)
  Strategic Aspects of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations (1986)
  Indo-Bangladesh Common Rivers and Water Diplomacy (1986)
  Gulf War : The Issues Revisited (1987)
  The SAARC in Progress : A Hesitant Course of South Asian Transition (1988)
  Post-Brezhnev Soviet Policy Towards the Third World (1988)
  Changing Faces of Socialism (1989)
  Sino-Indian Quest for Rapprochement: Implications for South Asia (1989)
  Intifada : The New Dimension to Palestinian Struggle (1990)
  Bangladesh : Towards National Consensus (in Bangla, 1990)
  Environmental Challenges to Bangladesh (1991)
  The Gulf War and the New World Order : Implication for the Third World (1992)
  Challenges of Governance in India : Fundamentals under Threat (1995)
  Bangladesh in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (1998)
  Nuclearisation of South Asia : Challenges and Options for Bangladesh (1998)
  The Middle East Peace Process and the Palestinian Statehood (2000)
  Pakistan and Bangladesh : From Conflict to Cooperation (2003)
  Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Bangladesh : A Case for People's Management (2003)
  WTO Dispute Settlement System and Developing Countries: A Neorealist Critique (2004)
  State Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention : Does One Negate the Other? (2006)
  Unipolarity and Weak States: The Case of Bangladesh (2009)
  Japan's Strategic Rise (2010)
  The Fallacy of Fragile States Indices: Is There a Fragility Trap (2017)
  Implications of China’s Belt and Road Initiative for Bangladesh: A Strategic Analysis (2020)
  Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience: A Quest for Human Security in Bangladesh (2020)
  Covid-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh: Economic Impacts and Policy Implications (2020)
  Understanding Bangabandhu’s Foreign Policy: Principles, Priorities and Diplomatic Strategies (2021)
  Repatriation of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals: Political Security and Humanitarian Assistance (2022)
  Revival of SAARC: Prospects, Challenges and Way Forward (2025)

BIISS Publications

- **BIISS Seminar Proceedings**
  Contemporary Development Debate: Bangladesh in the Global Context (2014)
  Moving from MDGs to SDGs: Bangladesh Experience and Expectation (2015)
  SAARC at 30: Achievements, Potentials and Challenges (2015)
  Bangladesh's Relations with Latin American Countries: Unlocking Potentials (2016)
  Civil-Military Relations in Democracy: An Effective Framework (2016)
  Recent Extremist Violence in Bangladesh: Response Options (2016)
  25 March — Gonohottya Dibosh (Genocide Day) (2017)
  Reconciling Divided Societies, Building Democracy and Good Governance:
  Lessons from Sri Lanka (2017)
  Promoting Cultural Diversity of Small Ethnic Groups in Bangladesh (2017)
  Upcoming 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, Dhaka:
  Revisiting A Shared Journey (2018)
  রোহিঙ্গা সংকটঃ বাংলাদেশ কর্তৃক গৃহীত পদক্ষেপ ও পর্যালোচনা (Rohingya Crisis: Measures Taken by Bangladesh and Appraisal) (2018)
  Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (2018)
  Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Experience from Japan (2018)
  Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100: Implementation, Challenges and Way Forward (2019)
  1971 Genocide in Bangladesh (2019)
  Bangladesh-India Cooperation: In the Changing Regional and Global Context (2019)
  Commemorating the Silver Jubilee of Diplomatic Relation
  Between South Africa and Bangladesh (2019)
  International Day of Peace 2019 and Launching of Book Titled
  "Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding:
  Discourses from Japan and Beyond" (2020)
  Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative for the
  Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh (2020)
  Bangladesh-Nepal Relations: Prospects for Sub-regional Cooperation (2020)
  Bangladesh and India: A Promising Future (2020)
  Track 1.5 BIMSTEC Security Dialogue Forum (2020)
  Bangabandhu's The Unfinished Memoirs: A Review (2020)
  ASEM Day: Celebrating and For Strengthening Connectivity (2020)
  Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Bangladesh: Options for Building Resilience (2020)
  Leadership of Bangabandhu and Its Relevance to the Contemporary World (2021)
  Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: Leadership and Foreign Policy (2021)
  Bangabandhu's Vision of Sonar Bangla: Bangladesh at 50 (2021)
  The Rohingya Crisis: Response of the International Community and the Repatriation Process (2021)
  Revisiting Contemporary Peace and Security Challenges in the South Region (2021)
  Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: An Epic of a Nation's Emergence and Emancipation (2021)
  Exploring Korea-Bangladesh Relations in the Last Five Decades and Beyond (2021)
  The Rohingya Exodus in Bangladesh: Regional and Global Security Implications (2021)
  Bangladesh-South Africa Bilateral Relations: Exploring the Potentials for Future Engagement and Cooperation (2021)
  Geopolitics of Indo-Pacific and Reconnecting the Bay of Bengal Littorals (2022)
  Human Rights in the 21st Century: Rhetoric and Reality (2022)
  Roundtable Discussion with H.E. Michele J. Sison, Assistant Secretary of State for
  International Organization Affairs, US Department of State and Her Delegation (2022)
  Bangladesh and the United States Relations: Moving Towards Enhanced Cooperation and Partnership (2022)

BIISS Publications

- **BIISS Seminar Proceedings**
  Hybrid Seminar on Blue Economy and Maritime Security: Bangladesh Perspective (2022)
  Bangladesh-India Relations: Confluence of Ideologies and Evolving Perspectives (2022)
  The EU in the Indo-Pacific: A Committed Partner for Stability, Prosperity and Peace (2022)
  Bangabandhu's Vision: Relevance in the Context of 21st Century (2022)
  Climate Diplomacy: Constraints and Choices for Bangladesh (2022)
  Bangladesh-Portugal Relations Quest for Deeper Bilateral Cooperation (2022)
  Changing Global Order Securing Bangladesh's National Interest (2022)
  New Frontiers of Human Rights Climate Justice in Perspective (2022)
  Hybrid Seminar on Look Africa: Exploring New Horizons for Bangladesh (2022)
  Hybrid Seminar on Promoting Multilateral Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (2022)
  BIISS Research Colloquium 2022 (2022)
  Celebrating 50 Years of Bangladesh-Nepal Friendship: Shared Vision of Peace, Progress and Prosperity (2023)
  Roundtable Discussion with Senior Director Eileen Laubacher, Senior Director for South Asia, United States
  National Security Council (USNSC) (2023)
  Seminar on Gig Economy and Bangladesh: Opportunities, Challenges and Way Forward (2023)
  Evolving Strategic Scenario in the Bay of Bengal Region: Bangladesh Perspective (2023)
  Seminar on Contemporary Bangladesh: Security and Economic Perspectives (2023)
  International Seminar on Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook: Opportunities and Way Forward (2023)
  Roundtable Discussion on Bangladesh's Strategic Autonomy: Participation in International/Regional Organisations including BRICS (2024)
  Seminar on The Rohingya Crisis: Contemporary Security Dimensions and Future of Repatriation Process (2024)
  Roundtable Discussion on Strategic Autonomy of Bangladesh: Alternative Trading Arrangements (2024)
  Interactive Session on Rohingya: Repatriation Process (2024)
  Seminar on Global Economic Slowdown Bangladesh's Apparel Industry and Decent Work (2024)
  Proceedings on the Regional Workshop on Bluer, Greener and Inclusive Growth in the Sundarban through an Ecosystem-based Approach (2024)
  Seminar on Economic Diversification and Global Market: Bangladesh's Opportunities and Way Forward (2024)
  Book Launching Ceremony Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity (2024)
  Book Launching Seminar on Development-Human Security Nexus:A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas (2024)
  Bangladesh's Climate Resilience and Financing: Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward (2024)
  Country Lecture Series: Bangladesh-Malaysia Relations (2024)
  Tourism for Attaining SDGs: Challenges and Prospects for Bangladesh (2024)
  Bangladesh-China Relations: A Future Outlook (2024)
  Reconnecting the Bay of Bengal Region: Exploring the Convergence of Interests (2024)
  Eminent Person's Lecture Series (EPLS): Challenges of Peace in the Contemporary World (2024)
  Global Climate Negotiations: Challenges and Priorities for Bangladesh (2025)
  Bangladesh-Nepal Ties: Towards A New Height (2025)
  Look Africa: Exploring New Horizons for Bangladesh (2025)
  From Malé to Dhaka: Strengthening Bangladesh-Maldives Bilateral Cooperation (2025)
  Five Decades of Bangladesh–China Relations: Towards a New Height (2025)
  ASEAN-Bangladesh Relationship: A Way Forward (2025)
  Bangladesh–South Korea Relations: Pathways for Future Cooperation (2025)

BIISS Publications

Promoting a Multistakeholder Approach to Support Police Reform in Bangladesh to Advance Comprehensive, People-Centered, and Human Rights-Based Reform Efforts (2025)
Promoting a Multistakeholder Approach to Support Criminal Justice Reform in Bangladesh to Enhance Equal Access to Justice for All (2025)
Harnessing Bangladesh's Youth Dividend: Future Imperative in a Changing World (2025)
Harnessing the Youth Dividend: Strategic Imperatives for Bangladesh in a Changing World (2025)
Beyond Bilateral Ties: Unlocking New Avenues in Bangladesh – Philippines Cooperation (2025)
The Power of Local: How Grassroot Communities Drive SDG Achievement in Bangladesh (2025)
Harnessing the Youth Dividend: Peace and Security Imperatives for Bangladesh in a Changing World (2025)
Bangladesh -US Tariff Deal: How to Optimise Trade Benefit (2025)
Bangladesh –Bhutan Relations: Elevating Bilateral Ties for Shared Prosperity (2025)
Regional Geopolitical Landscape: Impact on the Security Dynamics of Bangladesh and Way forward (2025)
Strengthening Ties: A Forward Look Between Bangladesh and Italy (2025)
Sino-south Asia Development And Cooperation (2025)
Bangladesh–Pakistan Dialogue: Exploring Pathways for Constructive Engagement (2026)

- **BIISS Country Lecture Series**
- **BIISS Country Lecture Series: Part- 1**
- **BIISS Country Lecture Series: Part- 2**



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) is an autonomous statutory institution established in 1978 by the Government of Bangladesh, the first of its kind in the region of South Asia. The main responsibilities of the Institute are to undertake study, research, and dissemination of knowledge on international relations as well as national affairs and state policy related to security, defence, foreign relations, international peace, security, and strategic aspects.

The priority areas of the Institute's research activities are: foreign policy, security and strategic issues with specific relevance for Bangladesh; regional, inter-regional and international cooperation; conflict studies, peace keeping, disarmament, non-proliferation and area studies. Contemporary issues of global and South Asian security are also the focus of research activities of the Institute.

The Institute provides necessary assistance as per the demand of the Government in the formulation of projects and policies of related matters and their implementations. The Institute also establishes working forum for acquiring further knowledge of relevant national and international issues and policies, and facilitating exchange of knowledge and views between officials engaged in the work of the Government. To fulfil its objective of knowledge generation, the Institute carries out exchange of information, opinions, and materials with other institutions and scholars engaged in research in the country and abroad on the above-mentioned subject areas. The Institute also acts as an archive for the study and research on international affairs and strategic studies.

The general guidance and superintendence of the Institute affairs are vested upon the Board of Governors, headed by a Chairman and consisting of representatives of government ministries, armed forces, academics and professionals. The Director General, the Chief Executive of the Institute, is also the Member-Secretary of the Board. Research activities of the Institute are carried out by the Research Faculty consisting of a team of full-time researchers with varied social sciences background.

Mailing Address

1/46, Old Elephant Road (West of Ramna Police Station), Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
Fax: 88-02-48312625, info@biiss.org, website: www.biiss.org