YEARS OF BANGLADESH
RETROSPECT & PROSPECT
6-9 DECEMBER 2021
A FOUR DAY VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ORGANISED BY

CO-SPONSORED BY

SOUTH ASIA PROGRAM
Cornell University
CONTEXT
To celebrate the golden jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) is organizing a virtual international conference, co-sponsored by the South Asia Program of Cornell University, which will explore the country’s developments in different sectors—politics, economy, society and culture. A number of national and international webinars have already been organized this year on Bangladesh. They have portrayed the remarkable story of Bangladesh’s development—how it has succeeded in rebuilding a war-ravaged economy and society and made steady progress in key indicators of human development and economic growth.

However, the story of Bangladesh’s progress is generally being told from a quantitative perspective, for example, the upward or downward trends in life expectancy, mortality, fertility, school enrolment, labor force participation, poverty reduction, export earnings, foreign exchange reserve, GDP, etc. The numbers do indicate significant gains in social and economic development, but they do not adequately capture the depth of the changes that have taken place in peoples’ lives in the economy, politics, society and culture of Bangladesh.

The CPD conference aims to deepen our understanding of Bangladesh’s multifaceted development over the last fifty years. The event will draw upon specially commissioned papers, covering a broad spectrum of issues addressing the qualitative dimensions of development and change as well as explore the processes which have produced these changes. The proceedings of the conference are expected to be published.

CONFERENCE THEMES
Theme 1: State, Society, Politics
Theme 2: Bangladesh’s Economic Transformation
Theme 3: Towards a Just Society
Theme 4: Social Transitions
Theme 5: Culture
Theme 6: Costs and Challenges of Development
Theme 7: Bangladesh in a Changing World Order
Panel 1: Inaugural Session and Keynote Presentation

Chair: Dr. Ahrar Ahmad

Welcome Address: Professor Rounaq Jahan
Distinguished Fellow, CPD
Dr. Fahmida Khatun
Executive Director, CPD
Professor Iftikhar Dadi
Director, South Asia Program,
Cornell University

Introduction to the Conference: Professor Rounaq Jahan
Distinguished Fellow, CPD

Keynote Presentation: Professor Rehman Sobhan
Chairman, CPD

Panel 2: State, Society, Politics

Chair: Dr. Ahrar Ahmad
Director General, Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation (GARF)

Paper 1: Evolution of State-Society Relations in Bangladesh: An Analytical Narrative
Presenter: Dr. Mirza M. Hassan
Senior Research Fellow, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University
Discussant: Professor Naomi Hossain
Research Professor, Accountability Research Center, American University

Paper 2: Islamist Politics in Bangladesh: The Nature, Scope and the Pathway
Presenter: Professor Ali Riaz
Distinguished Professor, Department of Politics and Government, Illinois State University
Discussant: Professor Habibul Haque Khondker
Professor, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Paper 3: State-making, Violence, and Political Muscle: Bangladesh as Polycratic State
Presenter: Professor Arild Engelsen Ruud
Professor, South Asia Studies, University of Oslo
Discussant: Dr. Philip K. Oldenburg
Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Columbia University

Q&A Session
Response from the paper presenters

Sum up: Dr. Ahrar Ahmad
Director General, Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation (GARF)
Panel 3: Bangladesh's Economic Transformation

Chair
Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud
Chairman, Economic Research Group (ERG)

Paper 1
Synergies and Tipping Points: Policy Actions, Market Responses and Economic Growth in Bangladesh
Presenter: Dr Syed Akhter Mahmood
Former Lead Private Sector Specialist, World Bank
Discussant: Dr Khan Ahmed Sayeed Murshid
Former Director General, BIDS

Paper 2
Bangladesh Transitioning to a Sustainable Post-Graduation Future
Presenter: Professor Mustafizur Rahman
Distinguished Fellow, CPD
Discussant: Dr Nazneen Ahmad
Country Economist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Paper 3
Institutional Challenges
Presenter: Professor Selim Raihan
Professor, Department of Economics, Dhaka University & Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM)
Discussant: Dr Ahsan Mansur
Executive Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh

Q&A Session
Response from the paper presenters
Sum up
Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud
Chairman, Economic Research Group (ERG)

Panel 4: Towards a Just Society

Chair
Professor Geof Wood
Emeritus Professor, International Development, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath

Paper 1
Poverty Trends and Dynamics
Presenter: Dr Binayak Sen
Director General, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
Discussant: Professor S.R. Osmani
Professor, Developmental Economics, Ulster University

Paper 2
Responding to the Challenges of Inequality
Presenter: Professor M.M. Akash
Professor & Chairman, Department of Economics, Dhaka University
Discussant: Professor S.R. Osmani
Professor, Developmental Economics, Ulster University

Paper 3
Towards a Just Governance
Presenter: Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman
Founder-Chair, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC)
Discussant: Dr Iftekharuzzaman
Executive Director, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

Q&A Session
Response from the paper presenters
Sum up
Professor Geof Wood
Emeritus Professor, International Development, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath
### Panel 5: Social Transitions

**Chair**

**Professor Bina Agarwal**  
Professor, Development Economics and Environment,  
Global Development Institute, University of Manchester

**Paper 1**  
**Human Development and Social Change**  
**Presenter:** Dr Selim Jahan  
Former Director, Human Development Report Office, UNDP  
**Discussant:** Dr Sabina Alkire  
Director, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford

**Paper 2**  
**Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**  
**Presenter:** Dr Sohela Nazneen  
Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex  
**Discussant:** Professor Elora Shehabuddin  
Professor, Transnational Asian Studies, Rice University

**Paper 3**  
**Civic Activism: CSO/CBO/NGO**  
**Presenter:** Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya  
Distinguished Fellow, CPD  
**Discussant:** Professor David Lewis  
Professor, Anthropology and Development, Department of International Development, The London School of Economics and Political Science

**Q&A Session**  
Response from the paper presenters

**Sum up**  
**Professor Bina Agarwal**  
Professor, Development Economics and Environment, Global Development Institute, University of Manchester

### Panel 6: Culture

**Chair**

**Professor Iftikhar Dadi**  
Director, South Asia Program, Cornell University

**Paper 1**  
**Shahbagh, Shapla Chottor and Bangladesh’s Meandering, Contending Mindscapes**  
**Presenter:** Professor Fakrul Alam  
Professor & Director, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Research Institute for Peace and Liberty, Dhaka University

**Paper 2**  
**The Changing Faces of Culture: Notes from a Time of Crisis**  
**Presenter:** Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam  
Professor, English and Humanities, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh & Former Professor, Dhaka University  
**Discussant:** Dr Azfar Hussain  
Interim Director, Graduate Program in Social Innovation & Associate Professor, Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies (IRIS) Department, Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Grand Valley State University

**Paper 3**  
**Changes in the Architectural, Urban and Settlement Landscapes of Bangladesh**  
**Presenter:** Professor Kazi Khaleed Ashraf  
Director General, Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements  
**Discussant:** Professor Adnan Z. Morshed  
Professor, School of Architecture and Planning, The Catholic University of America
Panel 7: Costs and Challenges of Development

Thursday 9 December 2021
Time: 06:00 pm - 07:45 pm Bangladesh Time (GMT+6)

Chair
Dr Fahmida Khatun
Executive Director, CPD

Paper 1
Bangladesh between World System and Green Growth: Past Trends and Future Trajectories
Presenter: Dr Iftekhar Iqbal
Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam
Discussant: Dr Md. Golam Rabbani
Head, Climate Bridge Fund Secretariat, BRAC

Paper 2
Fifty Years of Development Experience of Bangladesh: An Employment and Labour Perspective
Presenter: Dr Rizwanul Islam
Former Special Adviser, Employment Sector, International Labour Office, Geneva
Discussant: Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem
Research Director, CPD

Paper 3
Responding to Changing Geo-politics
Presenter: Professor Imtiaz Ahmad
Professor, Department of International Relations, Dhaka University
Discussant: Dr Sreeradha Datta
Centre Head, Neighbourhood Studies and Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation, India

Q&A Session
Response from the paper presenters
Sum up
Dr Fahmida Khatun
Executive Director, CPD

Panel 8: Bangladesh in a Changing World Order

Thursday 9 December 2021
Time: 08:00 pm - 09:45 pm Bangladesh Time (GMT+6)

Chair
Professor Rehman Sobhan
Chairman, CPD

Message
Professor Nurul Islam
Research Fellow Emeritus, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) & Former Deputy Chairman, Bangladesh Planning Commission

Panellists
Professor Rounaq Jahan
Distinguished Fellow, CPD
Professor Naila Kabeer
Professor, Gender and Development, Department of Gender Studies, The London School of Economic and Political Science
Dr S. Nazrul Islam
Chief of Development Research Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Conference Secretariat

Web: bd50.cpd.org.bd
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Open Session

Vote of Thanks  Dr Fahmida Khatun  
Executive Director, CPD

Professor Iftikhar Dadi  
Director, South Asia Program, Cornell University

Sum Up  Professor Rehman Sobhan  
Chairman, CPD

Conference Steering Committee

Chair  Professor Rounaq Jahan  
Distinguished Fellow, CPD

Member  Professor Rehman Sobhan  
Chairman, CPD

Member  Dr Fahmida Khatun  
Executive Director, CPD

Member  Professor Iftikhar Dadi  
Director, South Asia Program, Cornell University

Member  Dr Daniel Bass  
Program Manager, South Asia Program, Cornell University

Member  Avra Bhattacharjee  
Joint Director, Dialogue and Outreach, CPD

For Registration
www.bd50.cpd.org.bd/registration/

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