

# SIPG

# NEWS

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## Editor's Note

As the Pandemic continues to cause havoc across the globe, all of us had to adjust to 'a new normal', where classes, meetings, conferences and even interacting with friends and colleagues virtually. North South University, which used to be a pulsating and vibrant campus, was hushed into silence with empty classrooms, library, cafeteria, etc. But life went on, as it must. SIPG also had to adjust to the new reality. The new Batch of MPPG started their classes online from August 2020 with 10 Bangladeshis, one Malaysian, Two Nepalese and one Sri Lankan. Three foreign students had to join online classes from their respective countries, while one joined from Dhaka. This batch which was scheduled to undertake two courses in NIDA, Thailand from October also had to do those courses online as travel to Thailand was not possible. The 9th Batch completed their course within the extended time of two months during which time they completed their thesis work, which entails an important element of the programme. Their course had to be extended for two months to enable them to complete their field work related to thesis which became quite a challenge due to the ongoing pandemic. While the pandemic posed many challenges, it also gave rise to opportunities. Since virtual communication became the modus operandi for almost all activities, this was seized by SIPG to arrange a number of online webinars and conferences on international as well as regionally important issues ranging from global concerns of importance of United Nations, SDGs and Elections in USA to Rohingya crisis. These events created scope for gathering resource persons and participants across nations to deliberate and express themselves in those events, something which may not have been possible under normal circumstances. As we approach towards the end of a year that was stressful and at times even painful. Many of us lost relatives, colleagues and friends. It has also been a new experience for all. We now need to plan ahead for a post pandemic world which may be uncertain, volatile as well as even more challenging.

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# *SIPG Book Launching Program*

On 12th September, 2020, the South Asian Institution of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU) organized a virtual Book Launching program to unveil a book titled: *Gender Mainstreaming in Politics, Administration and Development in South Asia*. The book approaches gender mainstreaming from policy-and governance perspective and explore government initiatives to promote gender mainstreaming, challenges and results of those initiatives. Most of the chapters of this book were initially presented as papers at the Conference on Gender Mainstreaming in Politics, Administration and Development in South Asia in 2017, held at the North South University. The book includes chapters on Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



The webinar began with the welcome note of Professor Sk Tawfique M Haque, Director, SIPG of NSU. Later, Professor Ishtiaq Jamil from University of Bergen, Norway gave speech on behalf of the editorial panel which was followed by the reflection from

authors. Professor Krishna Menon from Dr. B R Ambedkar University of Delhi, India and Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) discussed the book as designated discussants.

Discussants of the program shed the light upon the diverse topics and broad range of issues related to gender mainstreaming that the book covered. They commented that the chapters of the book appropriately focused on the process of incorporation of gender issues in policy formulation and governance and the challenges to implement those policy and their implications.

Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice Chancellor of North South University graced the event as Chief Guest and the program concluded with the Vote of Thanks by Dr. M Mahfuzul Haque.

# *International Webinar on The UN in Times of People's Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism*

On 16-17 September 2020, Center for Peace Studies (CPS) under South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU) Bangladesh and the United Nations (UN) in Bangladesh co-hosted an international webinar titled, “The UN in Times of People’s Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism”. The aim of the webinar was to identify the successes of and challenges faced by the UN since its founding, with a view to draw from the lessons learned over the last 75 years and provide recommendations on the way forward.

In the inaugural session, HE Fabrizio Hochschild, Under Secretary General of UN and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Commemoration of the United Nations 75th Anniversary and Mr. M A Kashem, Chairman Board of Trustees (BoT) of North South University attended as Special Guests.

The webinar consisted of five substantive sessions focusing on different themes relating to the UN’s areas of work and function, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of COVID-19;



human rights in times of crises; peacekeeping and peacebuilding, humanitarian action; as well as a colloquium on civil society’s perspectives on the UN.

The general view that emerged from the webinar was that the UN has made notable contributions toward fulfilling its Charter obligations, particularly in regard to helping people achieve larger freedoms. Participants also remarked that despite the many achievements of the UN, much still needs to be done for the global population, notably in the areas of conflict prevention and prevention of gross human rights violations and genocide. Participants also raised questions about the UN’s effectiveness in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants further noted that the UN is the embodiment of a rule-based, open multilateral system and that its effectiveness and usefulness is determined by those who make it—the UN is what its member states wish it to be.

The two day long International Webinar concluded with the presence of Mr. Muhammad Abdul Mannan, Minister of Ministry of Planning, Mr. Shahriar Alam, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Mia Seppo, Resident Coordinator of UN, Bangladesh and Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice chancellor of North South University. The concluding session was moderated by Senior Fellow of SIPG, Ambassador Mr. Shahidul Haque. A joint statement prepared by United Nations and North South University was delivered in the closing session.

# *Webinar on US Presidential Election 2020 and Asia-US Relations*

The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and the Department of Political Science and Sociology (PSS) at North South University organized a webinar titled "**US Presidential Election 2020 and Asia-US Relations**" on 31st October 2020.

The Webinar began with the welcome speech of Dr. Md. Harisur Rahman, Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and Sociology, NSU. The panelists of the webinar discussed on broader areas in US election and electoral process, election's impact on the Asia-USA relationship and future shape of Asia's rising geopolitics.



Dr. Mahbubur Rahman, Associate Professor of NSU, discussed the election and electoral process of the USA. Dr. Ali Riaz, Distinguished Professor at the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University, USA shed light on the US-China relationship. According to

him, as Asia is now the heart of the global economy, China's emergence as global power is a concern both for Trump and Biden. From Asian Geopolitical context, Dr. M Sakhawat Hussain, Senior Fellow of SIPG, talked about the impact of the US election 2020 on the South Asian geopolitics. Former Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad has painted out that both Trump and Biden are on the same boat in targeting China's dominance. Dr. Raj Kumar Kothari, Professor of Political Science from India, discussed the Indo-US relationship and mentioned that even if Joe Biden comes to power, the relation between India and the US will be strengthened. Professor Shahab Enam Khan of Jahangirnagar University said that, Trump has taken out the US from world policing and Trump is the first US president elected for the US only, not for the whole world. Ambassador Shahidul Haque, Senior Fellow of SIPG, NSU discussed about the Biden's foreign policy.

After the valuable discussions, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice Chancellor of North South University and Chair of the event, concluded the webinar. Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, PhD, Director SIPG and the Chair of PSS moderated the webinar.

# *Webinar on Myanmar Election 2020*

Center for Peace Studies (CPS) under the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University organized a webinar titled "Myanmar Election 2020: Impacts on Rohingya Crisis" held on 10 November 2020. Distinguished panelists from Bangladesh, India, and Canada discussed Myanmar's recent parliamentary election and its impact on the Rohingya crisis.

The Webinar began with the welcome speech of Dr. Ishrat Zakia Sultana, Coordinator of CPS, SIPG. Professor Nehginpao Kipgen of O. P. Jindal Global University, India, said that India itself had failed to repatriate 40000 stranded Rohingyas in Myanmar. Regarding Bangladeshi stranded



Rohingyas, he also said that India has always been a champion of Myanmar because of its economic growth, trade interests, and border security. Professor A. S. M. Ali Ashraf at the Department of International Relations at the University of Dhaka said it is obvious that Myanmar's election was a farce. Brigadier General (Rtd) Dr. Sakhawat Hussain, Senior Fellow of SIPG, shed light on the impact of Myanmar's election on the Rohingya crisis, he said the election commission could not work independently in Myanmar. Dr. M Jashim Uddin, Associate Professor of NSU said that Myanmar election would not be playing any role in resolving the Rohingya crisis or Rohingya repatriation. Dr. Kawser Ahmed, Executive Director of the Conflict and Resilience Research Institute, Canada, opened, it is hard to expect anything in the development of geo-politics centered around the Rohingya crisis because of indirect support to Myanmar from China and India. Lead strategist of Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative and student of the University of Toronto, Jaivet Ealom, said like the Rohingya, other minority Muslim communities in Myanmar could not also participate in the election.

SIPG's Senior Fellow and former Ambassador, Shahidul Haque moderated the discussions. Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU and Chair of the webinar concluded the discussions with his valuable concluding speech.

# *Webinar on Bangladesh-Republic of Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties*

The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU) and Embassy of the Republic of Korea (ROK) at Dhaka, jointly organized a webinar titled “Bangladesh-Republic of Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties” on 15th December 2020. Distinguished panelists discussed the relationships between Bangladesh and Korea from political, economic, and cultural perspectives.

Dr. Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director, SIPG, NSU gave the welcome speech. In the inauguration session, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Mr. Masud Bin Momen thanked South Korea for supporting Bangladesh during the pandemic and also with the Rohingya crisis, and hope to see more proactive role from Republic of Korea Mr. LEE Jang-keun, Ambassador to Bangladesh, gave a comprehensive introduction on similar history and culture between Republic of Korea and Bangladesh.



From the panel, Mr. SUNG Ki-hak, Chairman and CEO of Youngone Corporation, opined time has come to possibly start negotiating an FTA with Bangladesh and Republic of Korea. While Professor and Dean, School of Business and

Economics of NSU, Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, highlighted the importance of collaboration in terms of knowledge, technology and skill transfers. Professor Delwar Hossain, Department of International Relations, the University of Dhaka, addressed the challenges and scope of BD-ROK relationship in terms of geopolitics.

Regarding bilateral and economic collaboration, Professor CHOE Wongi, Head of Center for ASEAN-Indian Studies, IFANS, elaborated on the core elements of the new Southern Policy of Korea and the benefits of Republic of Korea joining Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) where Bangladesh will be the chair for 2021-2023 period.

Director of Asia and Pacific Division 2, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea Mr. SHIN Dong Woo, said Bangladesh will need to reassure Korean investors on the advantageous economic potential and also consider collaborating in other sectors like energy and ICT.

Mr. Khondker Talha, DG of East Asia and Pacific Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh the importance to find out the effects of partnership when Bangladesh graduates from LDC. Ms. Abida Islam, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of Korea, in her closing remarks said, both countries' businesses need to participate more in trade partnership and collaboration.

Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU in his vote of thanks mentioned NSU's interest to make relevant input in policy making regarding Korean and Bangladesh relationship. Former Foreign Secretary and Senior Fellow of SIPG, NSU Ambassador, Shahidul Haque moderated the discussions.

## *Webinar on Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Challenges and Options for Bangladesh*

The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and the School of Business and Economics (SBE) of North South University organized a webinar titled "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Challenges and Options for Bangladesh" on 10th December, 2020.

From the panel, Professor Gour Gobinda Goswami of Department of Economics, North South University pointed out how RCEP will create new challenges for Bangladesh due to the economic relations it has with the member countries.



Barrister Nihad Kabir, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said how Bangladesh is unfortunately not a member of many effective bilateral/ regional trade agreements. Mr. Farooq Ahmed, Secretary General, Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), painted out how trade and politics is inseparable. Ambassador Riaz Hamidullah, Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands, mentioned RCEP is not enough - technology, knowledge incubation, a culture of innovation and managerial efficiency would be key in terms of 'preparedness' to open up, negotiate and engage with outside to ensure development.

Mr. MJH Javed, Director General, South East Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh urged not to look into FTAs only in term of tariff, as there are bigger multiple factors which makes this a regional partnership. Mr. Taufiqur Rahman, Head, LDC Unit, Development Division WTO, Geneva commented that from the trade perspective Bangladesh may not be impacted negatively in the short run however since it is an economic partnership in the long run there will be more factors other than trade that benefits the member countries of RCEP.

Dr. Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics University of Dhaka and Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), expressed his concerns about the loss of competitiveness of Bangladesh due to the internal trade flexibility between the member countries of RCEP. Mr. Iftakharul Islam, Chairman and Co-Founder of Asian Tiger Capital Partners also mentioned RCEP will have profound impact on regional and global chains.

SIPG's Senior Fellow and former Foreign Secretary Ambassador, Shahidul Haque moderated the discussion. Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU and the Chair of the webinar said, Bangladesh should consider being part of RCEP as it might help the country to gain more internationally.

## *Webinar on Build Back Better: How Bangladesh Can Address UN SDGs in a Post-Pandemic World?*

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting society and economics both in developed and developing countries with a substantial effect on the local environment. The progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also has taken impeded due to this pandemic. Whilst developed countries may expect a quick recovery and return to a neo-normal situation in a post-pandemic world, it is not quite certain how developing countries will cope to a changing global context. Under this backdrop, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at NSU and the University of Sunshine Coast (Australia) jointly organized a webinar on 1st of October, 2020, titled 'Build Back Better: How Bangladesh Can Address UN SDGs in a Post-Pandemic World?'. It has also provided guidelines on how Bangladesh can better address UN SDGs in a post-pandemic world and identify resources and support that are necessary to achieve the goals. The webinar was moderated by Dr Bulbul Siddiqi, Associate Professor, North South University and the Chair of the webinar was Prof. Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of North South University.

## *Webinar on The Rohingya Crisis: Western, Asian, and Bilateral Perspectives*



The Center for Peace Studies (CPS) under the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University in partnership with the High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh organized a webinar on August 24, 2020 with a view to address some of the key issues relating to bilateral,

multilateral, and regional relations related to the Rohingya Crisis. The purpose of this event was to generate ideas and share opinion and perspectives in hope of finding a solution to the Rohingya crisis. The speakers of the webinar were: Tan Sri Dato Seri Dr. Syed Hamid Albar, Former Foreign Minister of Malaysia. His Excellency Earl R. Miller, U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Ambassador Md. Shahidul Haque, Senior Fellow, South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), NSU His Excellency Benoit Préfontaine, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh. Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka.

## *Webinar on Impacts, Consequences and Responses to Covid-19 in Bangladesh*

Corona virus (Covid-19) is an emerging security threat for humankind. As of 8 th May 2020, it has already infected nearly 4 million people, and killed more than 2.7 hundred thousand people across the world. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has shared her concerns that the country might face famine as millions are already starving. At the international level, a global united platform is not clearly visible to fight against Covid-19. The US and its allies have already criticized the role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in combating this pandemic. The tug of war between the two super powers, the U.S. and China, about the origin of Covid-19 is being witnessed. Under this situation, what would be the geo-politics in the region in the coming days? Given this context , the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) organized a virtual conference titled “Impacts, Consequences and Responses to Covid-19 in Bangladesh: A Human Security Approach.” The purpose of the conference was to identify the drivers of the insecurities affecting human life, and analyze the consequences and responses at the government level, the international level and civil society/NGOs level in order to mitigate these insecurities. Based on the findings, CPS provided concrete policy recommendations to the concerned ministries/departments to tackle the insecurities/challenges in an integrated manner.

# WAY FORWARD

As we cross over to the middle of the year, amidst the ongoing Corona pandemic, SIPG has to adjust to what many call the ‘new normal’. Adjusting our original plan, the new 10th batch of MPPG students started their classes online from beginning of July and the ongoing thesis work of the 9th Batch has to be revisited

and then pushed back a bit further to enable the students to complete their work. Moreover, based on the experience of Webinars of SIPG and CPS- more such events such as would be arranged during the next couple of months.

## *Executive Masters in Policy and Governance (EMPG)*

(To be offered from 2021)

SIPG Program will launch an evening graduate program titled as “Executive Masters in Policy and Governance (EMPG)”. Admission circulars are expected to be published in different daily newspapers and SIPG website soon.

The targeted audience of the program would be fresh graduates, new entrants and mid-level working professionals from bureaucracy, private sector executives, embassy officials, and officials from NGOs.

For further information interested persons may contact with SIPG Office.

### Major Features of EMPG

- Classes on Friday and Saturday
- One-year master
- 3 semesters
- 36 credits
- **Specialization on:**
- Policy Analysis
- Human Resource Development
- Program Management

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