

## **We never view our relationships with China and India as a zero-sum game: Dr. Khalilur Rahman at NSU**

**Dhaka, 13 April 2025:** The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University (NSU) hosted a high-level seminar titled “Reassessing Sino-Bangla Relations: Chief Adviser’s Landmark Visit” on Sunday, April 13, 2025, at the university’s Syndicate Hall. The event brought together diplomats, scholars, media professionals, and policymakers to explore the evolving contours of Bangladesh–China relations following the recent diplomatic visit of the Chief Adviser to Beijing.



Dr. Khalilur Rahman, National Security Adviser and High Representative to the Chief Adviser on the Rohingya Issue and Priority Matters, graced the seminar as Chief Guest. Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, chaired the session. H.E. Mr. Yao Wen, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Bangladesh, also addressed the gathering as a Guest of Honour. The keynote presentation was delivered by Dr. Mohammed Nuruzzaman, Professor of Political Science and Sociology at NSU. He noted, “Since the July Revolution, Bangladesh’s foreign policy has undergone a strategic recalibration, with relations with China entering a new phase.” He further emphasized how tensions in Bangladesh–India relations have influenced the trajectory of Bangladesh–China ties.



Dr. Khalilur Rahman, in his remarks, described the visit as a “historic milestone” and asserted that “Bangladesh’s foreign policy is now entirely our own—we are no longer reliant on any country to shape it. This marks a clear reflection of our strategic autonomy.” He also highlighted imperatives for the future beyond the exigency of the present; he stressed the significance of employment generation, productivity enhancement, technology emersion, relocation of manufacturing units and supply change linkages. He said, “We never view our relationships with China and India as a zero-sum game; rather, our objective is to maintain meaningful and balanced relations with both.” H.E. Mr. Yao Wen, the Chinese Ambassador, praised the visit as symbolic and substantive. He reiterated China’s commitment to deepening cooperation with Bangladesh beyond politics, including future education, healthcare, and people-to-people contact. He reflected on broader global economic shifts: “This visit reaffirms that our relationship is not based on government change, but people-to-people solidarity.” Dr. Liu Zongyi, Senior Research Fellow at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), emphasized the sociocultural and strategic value of bilateral relations. Dr. Liu stressed China’s readiness to support Bangladesh’s post-LDC graduation and to expand trade and investment cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



Mohammad Sufiur Rahman, Senior Research Fellow at SIPG, pointed to transboundary water cooperation and agricultural, vocational, and technical educational training as key areas for future engagement. He noted that Bangladesh has long been expecting a meaningful Chinese role with people's interest at the centre beyond the government-of-the-day-centric approach. He further stated that the stabilisation of Rakhine and the improvement of the security situation there so as to create a conducive environment for the repatriation of the Rohingya. Syed Shahnawaz Mohsin, a foreign affairs analyst, urged a balanced perspective on the outcomes of the visit. "This is not a one-off event," he said. "It's part of a broader process of foreign policy recalibration."



Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director of SIPG, who moderated the event, concluded with a call to build sustained platforms for dialogue. “This visit reflects a critical foreign policy shift toward regaining Bangladesh’s strategic autonomy. At SIPG, we remain committed to fostering informed, inclusive, and policy-relevant academic discussions.” In his closing remarks, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury expressed gratitude to all speakers and guests. He reaffirmed NSU’s commitment to research-based policy engagement. He noted that the partnerships built through this visit—including MOUs in investment, technology, and healthcare—represent tangible steps forward for the youth and future of Bangladesh.

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