



CPS Eminent Persons Lecture Series

“Navigating New Currents: Bangladesh–US Relations in the Indo-Pacific Century”

31 August 2025, Syndicate Hall

North South University



On August 31, 2025, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) at North South University (NSU) hosted a public lecture under its CPS Eminent Persons Lecture Series titled “Navigating New Currents: Bangladesh–US Relations in the Indo-Pacific Century.”

Delivering the opening remarks, Professor M. Jashim Uddin, Director of CPS, highlighted Bangladesh’s geostrategic importance in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. He observed that the Bay has become a critical theatre of geopolitical contestation. Stressing the significance of last year’s democratic resurgence in Bangladesh, he underlined the expectations from the US to support Bangladesh’s democratic institutions while not viewing the country solely through the prism of India. He urged Washington and its Asian allies to prevail in upholding universal values of democracy and human rights. Professor Jashim also drew attention to pressing issues such as the Rohingya crisis and the Gaza genocide, noting their security implications for Bangladesh and the wider region.



The keynote lecture was delivered by Michael Kugelman, Senior Fellow at the Asia Pacific Foundation, who analyzed Bangladesh-US relations under the new Trump administration. He structured his talk in three parts: (1) the place of Bangladesh within the Indo-Pacific strategy; (2) the current state of bilateral relations; and (3) pathways for moving forward. He noted that the Indo-Pacific construct was historically designed to counter China's growing influence, with littoral states like Bangladesh gaining strategic weight. While bilateral ties grew under earlier administrations, relations faced turbulence in recent years. Kugelman pointed out that the Trump 2.0 administration remains unpredictable and its policies may be shaped by both geopolitical competition and commercial priorities. He stressed that Bangladesh must prepare for opportunities and limitations in trade, investment, and security cooperation while leveraging its diaspora and private sector to strengthen ties.

Dr. AKM Waresul Karim, Professor and Dean of the School of Business and Economics & Advisor, CPS at NSU, was a discussant. He underlined the inconsistencies in US-Bangladesh relations and the need for Washington to view Bangladesh as an independent partner rather than through the lens of India-China rivalry.



The event was chaired by Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, who reflected on the long-standing academic and developmental engagement between Bangladesh and the United States. He emphasized that while US-Bangladesh relations have undergone phases of change, a renewed focus is needed on capacity building, scholarships, and educational exchange, which once played a formative role in shaping Bangladesh's institutions.



Professor Abdur Rob Khan, Treasurer and Pro Vice-Chancellor (in charge) of NSU, in his vote of thanks, emphasized that Bangladesh must seek to benefit from the shifting dynamics between the US and China by utilizing opportunities for growth, investment, and strategic engagement.

The lecture was attended by academics, journalists, and students, followed by a lively Q&A session.