The relationship between international order and a state’s foreign policy is mostly interdependent. On one hand, states seek to influence international order to promote their national interests. On the other hand, international systemic forces compel states to adjust their foreign policy objectives and strategies according to changing global realities. It is often argued that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. However, in a globalised interdependent world, the influence of supranational and transnational developments and challenges in shaping states’ foreign policies can never be discounted. The contemporary waves of threats that transcend national boundaries, to a great extent, define the dynamics of states’ external relations.

In the last decades, while the focus of world politics has been largely on regional, transnational or economic issues, great power politics is nonetheless taking a new shape with the mounting influence of the rising powers, mainly China and India, and the resurgence of waning great powers like Russia and Japan. The emerging poles of the post-Cold War world are not only negotiating different modalities of
international conduct through a host of competing regional and global forums, they are also competing for geopolitical and economic interests and influences.

To understand the complexities of world politics within which states are readjusting their foreign policies and external relations, it would be critical to closely look at the dynamics of post-Cold War international environment. The end of Cold War rivalry between the two superpowers has been marked by a major shift in the global power structure. The world was turning towards a unipolar system under the reign of the ‘leader of the free world’, the United States (US). The demise of the Soviet Union signaled an enduring ‘liberal international order’, as articulated in Francis Fukuyama’s vision of ‘the End of History’. The 1990s saw Europe achieving unprecedented successes in its economic and political integration. The worldwide globalisation of liberal values and institutions ushered new hopes in the integration of different societies while keeping their distinctiveness in their unique cultural and historical dispositions. The democratisation project by the Western nations for the Global South gave an apparent expectation of a new wave of democracy in the contemporary world.

However, the world has hardly been going in that much-hyped direction, defying the expectations of the liberal optimists. This so-called liberal order started to get challenged by many crucial developments in the international system for the last three decades. The start of the new millennium was marked by the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. With the US-led War on Terror, particularly US invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq, extremist and terrorist groups are spreading rapidly, feeding on many unstable regions of the world, including the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia and Central Asia.

As a result, an increasingly intensified form of terrorism swept across all the continents, using ‘religion’ as its weapon of war against Western liberal values. From that point, rise of religious terrorism became one of the most defining characteristics of the post-Cold War security challenges. Terrorism has changed how warfare was viewed and raised many other issues, such as ensuring security while maintaining privacy, human rights and sovereignty, cultural xenophobia, etc. War now is no
longer limited to the concept of state versus state. Rather, states are now much more committed to fight transnational threats like Islamic State and Al-Qaeda.

Corroborating much of the Samuel P Huntington's 'Clash of Civilization' thesis, there has been a rising 'conflict of ideologies' to the global scale. The consequent diffusion of radical ideas and groups also cuts across crisis of identities, reviving ultra-nationalism and populism primarily in the liberal Western nations. Together with an increasingly intensifying process of globalisation, populist radicals have been backstabbing many of the liberal democracies. Right-wing nationalist movements have started to grow worldwide and right-wing populist parties started to gain ground in the political landscape of the northern hemisphere. The triumph of Brexit in the UK and the Trump administration at the helm in the US have indicated the paradox of liberal commitments of the developed West and the balance of global leadership has started to tilt towards China and Russia. This is particularly worrying as most states are struggling to secure their territories and economies both from the menace of terrorism and revival of different forms of ethno-religious ultra-nationalism.

The world right now is facing many other challenges like never before. Rapid climate change has become the most precarious threat to the existence of mankind. However, international actors and big powers are reluctant to bring any major progress both in cutting greenhouse gas emissions or helping developing countries in their adaptation efforts. US withdrawal from Paris Climate Accord shows that it will be very difficult for the international community to take comprehensive measure to fight climate change induced security challenges.

Besides, there is a concerning rise of anti-immigrant violence and xenophobia. The manifestations of the extremist ideologies and populist movements have resulted in creating diverse social conflicts and humanitarian crises. Starting from Afghanistan and Iraq, the unending conflicts in Syria and Yemen have proved that both state machineries and international community can hardly address issues of conflicts that divide communities and ethnic groups. The recent Syrian refugee crisis and the mass exodus of Rohingya community of
Myanmar to Bangladesh has shown that modern ‘borders’ are not immune from the mass exodus of refugees and put the international humanitarian regimes under question.

In addition, the power dynamics of the global system has significantly changed as well. The rise of China, India, South Africa and Brazil has shown that medium powers have significant influence in the politics of their regions. The Global South has been more active in cooperation among themselves. Following the example of the European Union (EU), many regional platforms, including African Union, Organization of American States (OAS) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been actively promoting trade and economic relations among member states with varying level of successes. On the other hand, China has been gradually increasing its influence in the Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Africa; and has emerged as one that could potentially challenge the US domination in global politics in the near future. Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia has also been playing a more active and albeit unsettling role in the global politics, such as annexation of Crimea or interfering in the recent US election.

The global dynamics has also changed due to the rise of the non-state actors. The non-state actors, be it multinational organisations or NGOs, now play a critical role in global politics. Although states remain the most important actors, non-state actors have been slowly included in global negotiations through separate forums and initiatives. The significance of NGOs in the UN climate change negotiations and the increased attention of the World Economic Forum (WEF) are testament of their growing importance.

The rapid progress of information technology is perhaps the most significant trigger of change in post-Cold War era. The world has become smaller due to the spread of affordable technology which has led to increased connectivity and a concomitant interdependence among states. It has opened the world to new possibilities and at the same time created many new challenges. Social media has brought the power to people to spread their ideas and ideologies, as exemplified by the Arab uprising. But it has also made people vulnerable to false information as shown by the 2017 US presidential election. Although
large scale trade and investment flows have created ample opportunities for most of the countries in the world, economic crises and shocks have also been largely potent in pushing for major foreign policy adjustments and readjustments in the last two decades.

All these changes in the global scenarios paint a complex and interesting picture for Bangladesh which puts friendship, adherence to international laws and integrity of state sovereignty in the apex of its guiding principles for conducting foreign relations. The prime target of Bangladesh’s foreign policy is to utilise its potential through the development and wellbeing of its people. To achieve this target, it is pursuing foreign policy of building close relations with existing partners and making new partnerships through cooperation and mutual understanding to maximise shared benefits and achieve long-term goals.

In the recent years, Bangladesh has been successful in many areas of its external relations and international engagements. The country has become a role model of development as it achieved almost all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets and is one of the leading countries that has significantly contributed to the process of developing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bangladesh has emerged as a leader in the world due to its peace-centric foreign policy in the UN peacekeeping missions. It holds second position in the list of countries by number of UN peacekeepers. Bangladesh has made considerable progress in many other areas, including electoral management, promotion and protection of human rights, administrative, judicial and security sector reform, women’s empowerment and socio-economic development and disaster management, among others.

Bangladesh has successfully resolved decades-old border dispute with India through the Land Boundary Agreement protocol in 2015. Teesta Agreement is also on the table. Besides, Bangladesh has succeeded to draw the attention of the world community to the Rohingya refugee crisis. Global leaders are putting pressure on Myanmar to take back the Rohingyas and protect their rights. Another significant achievement is the resolution of maritime boundary dispute with India and Myanmar. Bangladesh got sovereign rights over a vast area of the Bay
Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy

of Bengal and the resolution of the disputes have opened a new path for Bangladesh to explore oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal.

Bilateral relations with neighbouring countries are more consolidated now. Bangladesh has been at its best relations with India. The cooperation is expanding as well with China. With the visit of Xi Jinping in 2016, the Comprehensive Partnership of Cooperation has been expanded to Strategic Partnership of Cooperation. Bangladesh is a part of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China is coming forward with investments in energy, transport and infrastructure sectors. It is also maintaining sound relations with Europe and the Middle East and working in different fields like climate change, migration and development, governance and economic cooperation.

Although Bangladesh is not powerful in traditional sense, it has proved to the international community that it can make strong contribution in the international forums. For example, through a visionary foreign policy, the country has become an influential actor in the areas of global climate negotiation, international peacekeeping, developing global migration strategy and designing global counterterrorism strategy. The domestic compulsions of economic development and societal equity prompted Bangladesh to design a foreign policy where economic diplomacy and global peace are the key priorities.

The proactive roles of Bangladesh and its huge engagement in global issues are widely recognised by the international community. It also gained success in cultural diplomacy, some examples being the recognition of Mangal Shobhajatra, and the traditional art of Shital Pati weaving as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the UNESCO, the recognition of the historic 07 March speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a world documentary heritage; Jamdani Sari and Hilsa got recognition of Geographical Indication (GI) product, and so on.

While there are successes, Bangladesh is at a major crossroad of readjusting its foreign policy agenda to deal with the aforementioned difficult international environment as well as in the wake of its journey towards middle income status. The changing global dynamics and regional realities would be highly challenging for Bangladesh as its
Introduction

Critical stakes are growing day by day. The growing menace of extremism and terrorism, rising populism in the Western partner countries, uncertainty in the international manpower export market and Rohingya refugee crisis are some of the major challenges for Bangladesh. The country's relation with Myanmar is passing through a critical moment regarding the Rohingya issue. In addition, how to balance relations with the two rising neighbours, China and India, has turned out to be a critical diplomatic issue for the country. Transboundary water sharing is another outstanding issue to be taken care of. Bangladesh suffers from drought due to unilateral withdrawal of water from Teesta by India. So, the challenge would be to develop, manage and exploit water resources of the region for the betterment of people of all the countries involved. Gradual militarisation of Indian Ocean by the littoral states is another challenge for the maritime security of the country. On the economic front, the main challenge would be how to undertake effective measures to diversify the economy so that the country can avoid the so-called "middle income trap" and reach its goal of becoming a developed country by 2041.

In this backdrop, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organised a seminar titled "Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy", to enrich and contribute to the existing academic and policy discourse regarding Bangladesh's foreign policy. The themes for this seminar were: (i) Politico-Strategic Aspects, (ii) Economic Development, (iii) Global Human Movement and Humanitarian Issues, and (iv) Climate Negotiation. The present volume is a compilation of the revised and edited version of the papers presented in the seminar.

The second chapter titled “Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy” gives an overview of the changing global realities in the post-Cold War era. The paper tries to explain how the changes in the global dynamics are taking place and how those will affect nation states in general and Bangladesh in particular. Issues such as terrorism, the rise of right-wing populism in the West, changing balance of power and global leadership, the pursuit of SDGs and tackling climate change are likely to have tremendous impact on world politics and can possibly alter the status quo in the international order. Against this backdrop,
the author focuses on four key themes of global dynamics and their impact on world politics: politico-strategic aspects of global dynamics, economic development and globalisation, climate negotiation and global human movement and humanitarian issues. Based on these four themes, he discusses the foreign policy imperatives for Bangladesh to manoeuvre in the changed global landscape. He identified two key features in this respect: Bangladesh’s limitations as a geographically small state in conducting diplomacy and the fact that the country’s stakes in the changing global dynamics are very high and growing, especially in the areas of climate change and human development. He concludes by stating that developing countries like Bangladesh should be concerned regarding the rippling effect of a systemic power shift and as such Bangladesh needs to increase its presence in the international forums.

The third chapter titled “Climate Change and Bangladesh’s Foreign Policy” by Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad underscores the importance of forging alliances in the international negotiation process for countries like Bangladesh to be able to bring major progress in climate negotiation. Though there are scientific consensuses on the threats of climate change, political actors of all the countries are not active enough to address the cause of this menace. Since 1992, the main focus of the climate change was mitigation issues and in recent years the adaptation issues are getting attention of all the stakeholders. However, northern countries which are mainly responsible for climate change are not active enough to contribute to climate change negotiations. Especially, the role of the US has perplexed total negotiation process which concerned all climate victim countries. In this respect, the paper argues that as a major victim of climate change, Bangladesh needs to come forward to engage international actors in the international negotiation process. The author observes that it would be difficult for Bangladesh to make major breakthrough in the climate negotiation without forging alliances in the negotiation tables. To establish such alliances, Bangladesh also needs adequate preparation in its diplomatic skills and should develop skilled human resources by giving effective training on the issues of climate change and negotiation.
The fourth chapter titled “Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Diplomatic Challenges in Contemporary Times” discusses complex psychological manifestations of diplomacy with reference to Bangladesh and the changing global dynamics. By defining diplomacy as a politico-economic and psychological exercise, the paper identifies contemporary challenges of Bangladesh foreign policy in the way of achieving national goals by maintaining the country’s historically nurtured values. The paper focuses on three contemporaries of Bangladesh foreign policy: the genocide of Bangladesh in 1971 which brought hopelessness to hope and formulated Bangladesh foreign policy based on the principles of independence; the globalisation which opened scope for Bangladesh to explore Ready Made Garments (RMG) market and expand an influential diaspora; and lastly, the Rohingya issue which gave message to Bangladesh that the country needs to establish its position in the regional geopolitics for securing its national interests. The paper recommends that Bangladesh needs to be active for pursuing the benefits of globalisation and at the same time it has to be aware about the subaltern globalisation where small countries may lose many things if they cannot act in right manner. The paper concludes that the country can gain from three contemporaries by focusing on the “theory of abundance”, rather than the “theory of scarcity”. Bangladesh needs to devise diplomacy both as an art and as a science to be successful in its diplomatic efforts.

The fifth chapter titled “Economic Development and Bangladesh Foreign Policy” highlights challenges for Bangladesh’s economic development in the wake of the country’s graduation to middle-income country status and proposes various recommendations to overcome those challenges. With a significant geographical location, Bangladesh is in a critical juncture of its development process due to its graduation to middle-income country status. Moreover, the rise of Asia as a global economic power hub makes a global power shift towards Asia with new security threats which are likely to pose challenges for Bangladesh to achieve its development goals. The paper, therefore, focuses on some challenges, including ensuring inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and achieving strategic partnership with the region. The author argues that Bangladesh belongs to an advantageous geographical location, but its achievements from the region are not satisfactory.
Hence, the country needs to be integrated with regional economies and one of the foreign policy priorities should be the promotion of connectivity initiatives like BRI. The paper concludes that in order to keep the country from falling into the ‘middle income trap’ and keeping itself relevant in the region, a balanced foreign policy mechanism needs to be adopted.

The sixth chapter titled “Global Human Movement, Humanitarian Issues and Bangladesh Foreign Policy” discusses the interconnectedness between migration and development with reference to Bangladesh’s success and challenges in migration governance. In a world where both forced and voluntary migrations have become much debated issues, Bangladesh has a dual interest as a source country of labour as well as refugee receiving country. Pursuing foreign policy goals that will reflect those dual interests is a challenge for Bangladesh. In this context, this paper focuses on recent global human mobility from and to Bangladesh, both forced and voluntary, and its implications for the country’s foreign policy. The paper claims that though Bangladesh has signed MoUs with many destination countries for Bangladeshi migrants, migrants are facing human security issues due to destination country’s weak human rights protection mechanism. Bangladesh needs to negotiate on such issues bilaterally and multilaterally. On the issue of Rohingya crisis, the paper recommends that Bangladesh should try to resolve the issue through diplomatic means. Since bilateralism so far failed to produce desired outcomes, Bangladesh needs to pursue multilateralism more rigorously.