



**Bangladesh Foundation
For Regional Studies**

PROCEEDINGS

Book Launching Ceremony

Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity

Wednesday, 06 March 2024

Jointly Organised by

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)

and

Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies (BFRS)



**Bangladesh Foundation
For Regional Studies**

PROCEEDINGS

Book Launching Ceremony

Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity

Wednesday, 06 March 2024

Jointly Organised by

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)

and

Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies (BFRS)

**Publications Officer**

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)

1/46, Old Elephant Road (West of Ramna Police Station)

Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

Phone: (880-2) PABX: 48315808, 222223808, Ext. 136

Fax: (880-2) 48312625, e-mail: po@biiss.org

Website: www.biiss.org

Designed & Printed by

nymphaea

Hashim Tower, Suite 6C, 6th Floor

205/1/A, Tejgaon–Gulshan Link Road, Dhaka 1208

Phone: +88 02 222262032, +88 02 222262054

E-mail: info@nymphaea-bd.com

Website: www.nymphaea-bd.com

Date of Publication: 30 April, 2024

Price: Tk. 120 | US\$ 5

BOOK LAUNCHING CEREMONY

Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) in collaboration with Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies (BFRS) organised a Book Launching Ceremony on “Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity” on Wednesday, 06 March 2024 at the BIISS auditorium. **Dr AK Abdul Momen, MP**, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. **Ambassador AFM Gousal Azam Sarker**, Chairman, BIISS, chaired the event. Director General of BIISS, **Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan, ndc, afwc, psc, G+** delivered the welcome address. **Dr Sreeradha Datta**, Professor, OP Jindal Global University, India, and editor of the book introduced the book and deliberated on it. **Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea**, Director, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore and **Ambassador M Humayun Kabir**, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) also presented their reflections on the book. An open discussion session followed the presentations. **Mr ASM Shamsul Arefin**, Chairman, BFRS delivered the vote of thanks at the end of the Seminar.

Honourable Members of Parliament, senior officials from different ministries, former ambassadors, senior civil and military officials, media, academia, researchers, faculties from various universities, the business community and representatives from international organisations participated in the book launching ceremony and enriched it by presenting their valuable opinions, comments, suggestions, and observations during the open discussion session.



WELCOME ADDRESS



Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan, ndc, afwc, psc, G+

Director General, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS)

Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan, ndc, afwc, psc, G+, Director General, BISS paid his most profound reverence to the memory of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members along with three million martyrs who laid their lives for the liberation of Bangladesh.

The Director General marked the day as a significant moment to celebrate the dedication, creativity, and hard work of 13 authors and **Dr Sreeradha Datta**, who has poured their heart

and soul into crafting a narrative that promises to captivate, inspire, and provoke thought. He mentioned that within the pages of **Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity**, there lies a world waiting to be explored and ideas waiting to be embraced.

The Director General introduced the creative and brilliant mind behind the book, Professor Dr Sreeradha Datta, from O.P Jindal Global University. He added that Dr Datta was a Senior Fellow and she headed the Neighbourhood Studies Centre of the Vivekananda International Foundation. She is also a non-resident Senior Fellow with the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore. She was the former director of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Calcutta, India. Professor Datta's publications include seven books, which are: *Act East Policy and Northeast India*; *Caretaking Democracy: Political Process in Bangladesh, 2006-2008*; *Bangladesh: A Fragile Democracy*; *The Northeast Complexities and its Determinants*; *Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges*; *Changing Security Dynamics in South East Asia and Political Economy of India's North East Borders*. Professor Dr Sreeradha Datta has also published over 150 articles in journals, edited volumes, newspapers, and academic websites. She has been the recipient of international fellowships from various institutions including the German Institute of Global Affairs, Distinguished Indian Scholar Series University of Taiwan, International Visitors Leadership Programme, USA, and Visiting Fellow at Jadavpur University, etc. She has also been awarded the Shelton Kodikara Award for South Asian Strategic Studies.

Book Launching Ceremony
Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity

The Director General added that Dr Datta's latest contribution to the realm of intellectual creation, **Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity**, narrates the remarkable journey of growth and development. This book provides us with a ray of hope as it expresses the true potential of Bangladesh in its pages. This book is rich with analysis ranging from the development trajectory of Bangladesh to foreign policy, climate change to diaspora, bilateral relations with neighbors to regional and extra-regional actors' dynamics. It also paints a picture of Bangladesh which holds promise and prosperity not only for the greater good of the region but for the world as well.

In conclusion, the Director General extended his deepest gratitude to all those who contributed to bringing this book to life, from the publishers who believed in its potential to the readers who will breathe life into its pages.



INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE BOOK



Dr Sreeradha Datta

Professor, O P Jindal Global University, India

Professor Dr Sreeradha Datta from the O P Jindal Global University, India, at the outset, thanked the Chairman, Director General, and all the officers of BISS for organising the book launching event. For her, it's a matter of honour and privilege to have such type of exposure that BISS offers. She reminded the audience that she keeps coming back to South Asia as this is one of her core areas of interest and Bangladesh has become a recurring theme in her work.

Professor Datta said, over the years she has examined different sections and different sides of Bangladesh, and it constantly captivates her imagination. The book 'Bangladesh on a New

Journey,' is a continuation of the work that she did in her previous book titled 'Bangladesh at 50.' In this book, she examined domestic politics in great detail because she thought that should be a reference point. But alongside, she also examined the foreign policy in a detailed manner. It made her think about the foreign policy trajectory that Bangladesh has taken over the years, and that is the reason why she named the book as 'The New Journey.' The new journey for her is a departure from the way she understood Bangladesh during the earlier decades when Bangladesh was liberated. At that time, Bangladesh was known for the natural calamities that it had to struggle with, and the kind of economic distress that it went through. In one of her previous works on the liberation war of Bangladesh, she examined a bit of archival work where she observed notations by ministries and many letters that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had written. By reading these, she understood the struggles of building a new nation for a leader like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Today's Bangladesh is very different than it was during the post-independence period when Bangladesh had to reach out to others for economic assistance. Everybody now wants to be on the right side of Bangladesh. This is a completely new phase and this book is a demonstration of something of a more futuristic trend. She hopes and believes that Bangladesh is actually on the cusp of beginning a new journey where every country whether it is the US, Russia, China, and of course India wants to be a partner of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's growth journey is driven by three heavy-duty growth verticals i.e., the agriculture sector, ready-made garment industry, and remittance. These are the drivers of the miracle story of Bangladesh that is always referred to. But in addition to these, Bangladesh is positioned in such a geography right now, where the entire global attention has come, specially because of the Bay of Bengal. The Bay of Bengal is core to Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia. She, at this juncture acknowledged the fact that there remains a number of challenges on the ground, both on the international front and on the domestic front, but

Book Launching Ceremony
Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity



she puts faith in Bangladesh in terms of dealing with these challenges. She mentioned that international politics and life has never been without challenges and Bangladesh has confronted challenges from day one. About the size of Bangladesh, she said that it is also extremely important. Unlike these powers who have gone into this whole competition matrix, Bangladesh has steered clear of that course. In this regard, she said that in this book, on and off, the authors and the editor constantly referred to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's foreign policy doctrine – “friendship to all and malice towards none”, which has been the core way that Bangladesh has reached. In South Asian politics, how Bangladesh overcome adversities is an example to see.

Over the years, it has been witnessed that how not-so-good friends have turned into absolutely strong and safe partners in the case of foreign relations of Bangladesh. She observed, how important and critical Bangladesh is and has been for India. In this regard, she said much of what Prime Minister Modi has envisioned for India, not only in South Asia but outside, necessitates that Bangladesh holds India's hand. Without that, none of the large vision that the leaders of the region have is going to be possible. It is incredible that being a middle-sized country, Bangladesh is able to lead and stay out of the constant hostility that is happening in the region and beyond. Bangladesh is also coveted by all because it is like a force multiplier. Because of the kind of positioning Bangladesh has at the UN and at other international organisations, and the way it has been able to navigate itself, Bangladesh has now been able to reach out across the globe. Bangladesh has made a new growth story in terms of international attention.

Earlier, it was not that the world did not know about Bangladesh, but in the 1970's, for a variety of reasons the bipolar world did not remember Bangladesh much. But in today's multi-polarity, she thinks Bangladesh's space is increasingly becoming more important. This book is about how the authors think Bangladesh needs to move in the coming days. For her, Bangladesh needs to move out of its modest journey that is reflected in the foreign

policy and take much harder choices. To describe the Bangladeshi growth story, she said it has to be far more layered than mere balancing. She added, it also has to be far more responsible in terms of what it means not only to its immediate neighbourhood but also to the larger ones. For a very long period of time, this region of South Asia has been kept very much boxed in 'South Asia'. She thinks, this journey of Bangladesh is completely beyond South Asia. It's now global.

Professor Datta added, a recent report by Goldman Sachs talks about how in the next decade, Bangladesh is going to be in the top 10 countries. This is a reflection of the kind of work that has happened in terms of the domestic trajectory, the growth story, and the way it has been able to politically position itself.

About the book, Professor Datta said that it has a thematic way of looking at some of the core issues which will constantly be something that Bangladesh has to grapple with, deal with, and take it forward. There are chapters in this book including themes like national identity and religion, climate, environment, natural calamities, and some of the core bilateral issues with US, China, India, and Pakistan. Her chapter is the core one which is about Bangladesh in the view of Bay of Bengal and how the Indo-Pacific dynamics are played out here. Finally, Professor Datta said that, for her, Bangladesh stands right now on the cusp of a completely new fascinating story yet to be unravelled. But of course, challenges may be there staring in the faces but Bangladesh, she hopes, will definitely overcome it.



DISCUSSION ON THE BOOK



Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea

*Director, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS),
National University of Singapore*

Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea, Director, ISAS expressed his pleasure to be in Dhaka for the second time at the invitation of BIISS. He congratulated Professor Sreeradha Datta for the publication of a very important, timely and comprehensive book. He also expressed his gratitude to his colleague Ramita Iyer from the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) who has been a pivotal part of this project from day one. He shared that he was delighted that ISAS have been part of this project and publication.

Dr Sevea highlighted three facets of the book which he thought to be particularly important. The first important thing that this book tried to do was to track the trajectory of Bangladesh's development and relate that trajectory to Bangladesh's future course. So, the big question is, how did Bangladesh get to where it is now, from its emergence and independence under very difficult circumstances? How has it emerged as the second-largest economy in South Asia? And, what are the facets of its contribution to the world? Here he referred to Bangladesh's GDP growth which is about six per cent a year, the highest in South Asia. Dr Sevea stated that the book further inquired about how has Bangladesh brought poverty levels down by 25 per cent since 1991. And, how has Bangladesh got to the stage where it is set to graduate from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) status by 2026? Here he clarified that when he questioned 'how', he is not expressing surprise or shock, rather he meant that there is a need to critically examine the decisions that are made, the trajectories that have evolved and also the prioritisation of certain sectors within the economy and how it played out. Taking stock of Bangladesh's present position is the issue here. This involves looking ahead, examining the prospects and potential for the economy, but also examining some of the challenges that Bangladesh, like other countries, will be confronted with in the years to come. Dr Sevea shared that a sizable part of the book is dedicated to economic choices and decisions that are made. The rise of the ready-made garment sector is discussed among other things.

Dr Sevea added that the book also attempts to see how Bangladesh has engaged with some of the very contemporary and timely issues that are going on. For instance, the Ukraine war and the supply chain disruptions. The book also tries to look ahead and see how Bangladesh is poised to negotiate the issue of blue economy, especially in the Bay of Bengal. Another important section of the book is dedicated to examining the foreign policy imperatives of Bangladesh and its approach towards international relations. Here Dr Sevea referred to the idea of 'friendship to all, malice to none'. This book attempts to see how the doctrine has played out over the years, and how Bangladesh is poised to negotiate its position in the evolving geopolitical arena.

Dr Sevea apprised that climate issue which are incredibly important not only for Bangladesh, but the entire South Asian region is discussed in the book. The issues of global order are also brought up. Dr Sevea further added that there are two more aspects of the book which are incredibly important, although they are not necessarily flashed out as chapter headings. One point is how should scholars and state actors examine or study Bangladesh i.e., how should they approach Bangladesh? Dr Sevea reflected that most of the authors in the book have moved away from the idea of looking at Bangladesh as a small state. The idea of a small state has dominated much of the writings on Bangladesh outside the country. Here he viewed that with a population of 190 million i.e., the eighth largest population in the world, and with the current GDP size, Bangladesh is by no means a small state. However, it has been referred to as a small state in some theorisation because of its location and relative size with regard to India and China. Dr Sevea stated that the book is really helpful in this regard because it breaks that prism. It turns it around somewhat and looks at Bangladesh beyond its relations with India and China. It locates Bangladesh in a broader context of region shaping and region framing. Here the readers can get a sense of Bangladesh's position, not as a neighbour to India or China, but for its centrality in various geoeconomic and geopolitical formations. Particularly important is the centrality of Bangladesh in connectivity networks. Here Dr Sevea reminded that South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world. But looking at Bangladesh one can see that Bangladesh is at the forefront of a number of connectivity initiatives, be it the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) or The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Looking ahead, there are discussions about Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and whether Bangladesh would like to consider joining. Dr Sevea mentioned that ISAS is particularly interested in locating Bangladesh as a connectivity hub within South Asia and Southeast Asia. He



referred that Bangladesh has been a part of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum since 2006. Now Bangladesh is also looking to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner. Dr Sevea shared that blue economy is going to become far more important in the short and medium term. Bangladesh has a very important role in that aspect as well.

Dr Sevea shared that the third facet of this book is about changing the prism of looking at Bangladesh and South Asia. This book proposes to start looking at South Asia through the prism of Bangladesh, instead of looking the other way. Here Dr Sevea once again highlighted Bangladesh's pivotal geographical, geopolitical and geoeconomic positioning. He noted that in the evolving international order and in a time where there is a crisis of multilateralism, Bangladesh negotiated a very interesting position for itself and also for South Asian states. This is visible in Bangladesh's approach to the Ukraine war or India-China competition. This can add a whole new dimension to how international relations is studied in South Asia.

As Dr Sevea reached the end of his deliberation, he shared that Bangladesh is a very important point of analysis and study for the ISAS which is located in Southeast Asia. Dr Sevea highlighted two aspects of ISAS. One is that it examines the region of South Asia. He shared that ISAS is not an institute from India or from South Asia. It analyzes each of the South Asian countries. At the same time, it also examines the relations within South Asian countries, the South Asia region and Southeast Asia. In this regard, Singapore-Bangladesh relations are incredibly important. For a lot of people in Southeast Asia, Bangladesh is an important country. For instance, the recent upgrading of the Singapore consulate to a High Commission is a sign of the growing importance of Bangladesh. This book is in a sense an indication and culmination of that interest. Dr Sevea concluded by hoping that people engage with the book.



Ambassador M Humayun Kabir

President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute

Ambassador M Humayun Kabir, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute mentioned that the book is a futuristic endeavor, and it looks at Bangladesh from the future, zooming it from outside in. He mentioned that Dr Datta gathered scholars and other academicians from around the world with different prisms or perspectives from outside. Bangladeshi writers are also present, like himself along with Dr Titumir. He further mentioned that being a part of this process was a privilege for him. Ambassador Kabir said that from India, Dr Datta and as well as other practitioners, scholars, writers were part of the book. Dr Datta also brought in the scholars from the United States, Australia, Germany, and China, and they took

their different perspectives or lenses to understand how, what is the future of Bangladesh or how Bangladesh has come to this point.

He stated that Bangladesh is a socially driven country and is a country of the people. People are the real drivers of this country. When the people are the leaders, or they are the ones who drive the process, something unusual or unexpected can come. Bangladesh's journey is one of the extraordinary journeys of the common people, hence these are some elements that have come up in the book. He further stated that he found key four threads while reading through the 13 articles and one epilogue that Dr Datta's book has incorporated.

The first thread that Ambassador Kabir pointed out is the identity. Dr Datta and other writers have mentioned and elaborated on how Bangladesh's identity has changed over the last 52 years, and possibly it will take further transformation in the decades to come. Bangladesh started its journey as a poor country, nondescript, devastated by nature, and at the bottom of the ladder. Now, gradually over time, Bangladesh have emerged from that identity to a country that can trade, that can earn its living, and emerge as a trading nation. It has now become a partner in the region and beyond the region. So, the identity has been changing over the years. How that identity is framed in the future, would also be a factor that can frame us or will shape our future.

Ambassador Kabir further stated that the three other threads play a very important role throughout chapters of the book. One of the threads is the economy. The major issue that Dr Datta has rightly mentioned is that the economic performance or economic growth is the real attractive story that everybody in the world is now taking note of. The second issue is demography and the diaspora community, and the third is diplomacy.

Discussing the 'economy thread', Ambassador Kabir mentioned that Bangladesh's growth story has been written particularly during the last 30 years of the globalisation process, of which it is a net beneficiary. He further said that the growth has been coincidental or a co-partner in the process of globalisation. Now that globalisation has taken a hit, it is being redefined. Now, how Bangladesh responds to that will also create either an opportunity or a challenge for us. So, that needs to be taken into account because this process is beyond us. We are a part of this

process, but how the challenges of globalisation are framed or addressed will perhaps either facilitate or hinder our possibilities in the future. Ambassador Kabir deliberated that two things are now creating difficulties, firstly, the rise of economic nationalism in countries such as China, India, the US, and Europe, where they are now looking towards themselves. The benefit of the opening of the global market, which Bangladesh seems to enjoy, is not certain whether it will be obtained by us, and secondly, protectionism of different kinds is now coming up. He asserted that when we discuss continuing our economic journey in the decades to come, these are the issues that will need to be dealt with.

Ambassador Kabir further said that, on the demographic side, if the case of the diaspora is considered, a chapter exists on the diaspora, but it is believed that Bangladesh's story is the story of human energy. This issue was raised by Dr. Titumir. How our human resources are to be utilised at the domestic level and the integration of the expected community, the 13 million Bangladeshis currently employed outside, and the diaspora community, is a concern. Due to these factors, when one observes the domestic scenario, five crore unemployed youths are still present. This is not a good story, but there is an energy that we can tap into. Furthermore, when we look outside, the expected working class is often viewed solely as providers of dollar remittances, yet they could serve as an investment tool. Particularly, the diaspora community could serve as such a tool. India and China are benefiting from this approach. Therefore, the future of Bangladesh in the forthcoming years will also be influenced by how our labour and human resources are utilised, both within and outside Bangladesh. This will be an important issue that will define our future.

Diplomacy is the third thread that was discussed by Ambassador Kabir. He said that multilateralism has been mentioned in the book by Dr Sreeradha. However, one of the chapters written by Johannes Plagemann



discusses the theoretical challenges faced by Bangladesh. This issue has been mentioned a couple of times by renowned scholar C Raja Mohan. In the Asian region, it is seen that, in the context of the geopolitical unfolding, multilateralism is appearing to be a new norm. The question is, as a country like Bangladesh, which has to deal with power asymmetry, how is that kind of environment going to be dealt with by us? He stated that note must be taken of the fact that the rise of Bangladesh was due to peaceful diplomacy being maintained and a peaceful environment being achieved. But with the unfolding geopolitical challenges, can that be maintained, or can that kind of peaceful environment in the region and outside the region be expected? What is happening in Myanmar, how it will unfold, and how other power equations, major powers, will interact with each other, are unknown. So, in light of that, our diplomacy would be an important tool to navigate in that kind of environment. We do not have that kind of experience yet, although Bangladesh has navigated so far by keeping itself out of the geopolitical foreplay. But in the coming days, if our journey is to be continued and a relative peace or peaceful environment around us is to be maintained through which we can rise, being creative will be necessary. Ambassador Kabir emphasised that our diplomacy should be professionalised. Investment in diplomacy is necessary because that is where a fence can be created around us and growth can be continued, contributing to regional growth and also to the global environment, whichever way it evolves in the coming years.

In conclusion, Ambassador Kabir highlighted that three things are considered important for Bangladesh. One is the economy, which remains an issue that can facilitate our progress. The second is demography, which is seen as an asset that needs to be utilised. And thirdly, professional diplomacy can aid our growth. The material to contemplate on these aspects has been provided by Dr Datta and by writers and scholars from around the world. If we can follow through on these insights, perhaps a better future can be sustained in the coming years.

OPEN DISCUSSION



Ambassador Abdul Hannan

Former Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva and Vienna

Ambassador Abdul Hannan began his deliberation by congratulating Dr Sreeradha for an eye-opening and scholarly book. He noted that in Dr Sreeradha's writings, she mentioned about the two military regimes born in the cantonment, and expressed that the anomalies and mismanagement of the whole economy were not a choice for the subsequent government like Awami League, to take over. However, Ambassador Hannan insisted that it was forced upon them. It means that the Awami League government had to carry the baggage. Ambassador Hannan mentioned that, in the book it was also discussed that there is a lack of political space. Ali Riaz suggested a hybrid

economy in the democratic process. Ambassador Hannan expressed that he found little contradiction in this regard. He shared that in a political process, it is not the responsibility of the government to deliver everything. It is the similar responsibility of all political parties to contribute in the respective fields for institution building for democracy. Ambassador Hannan found that there was a kind of paucity in articulating this in the book and it needs clarity.

Next, Ambassador Hannan shared some examples of development. He referred that the development of Singapore is known for Lee Kuan Yew. In neighbouring India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is regarded as a champion of a trillion-dollar economy, aspiring to be the third largest in the world soon. Ambassador Hannan viewed that the role and contribution of leadership is not truly reflected in the book. Discussion regarding how the present leadership has given a vision for transformational development for the first time in Bangladesh's history, a vision engaging and taking the people in partnership is not adequate in the book. Ambassador Hannan found that although Bangladesh's indomitable development and tremendous success have been amply reflected in the book, the contribution of the leadership is not sufficiently articulated. He expressed that the claim of political space, claim of the hybrid governance and other issues need to be situated in the correct perspective. This is important because this is a book placed before the younger generation. It is important to let them have a comprehensive understanding of the political development, the development in foreign policy and other issues.



Ambassador Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, Bir Bikrom

Former Foreign Secretary, Government of Bangladesh

Ambassador Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury shared that in the book Dr Sreeradha talks about multifarious challenges Bangladesh faces and how Bangladesh manages those. One specific challenge is mentioned in the book but only in passing. This is related to Myanmar. Ambassador Chowdhury highlighted that Myanmar is the only country that is an impediment. In addition to the Rohingya problem and the security threat that Myanmar is posing to Bangladesh, Myanmar is an impediment even in the broader ASEAN or Southeast Asian region. Although Bangladesh may have malice to none,

now it seems that this one neighbouring country has malice towards Bangladesh. Ambassador Chowdhury hoped that in future writings, Dr Sreeradha would bring forth the issue that Bangladesh is having an impediment with the immediate neighbour to its east.

Mr Salahud Din Ahmed

Former member of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission

Mr Salahud Din Ahmed shared his comments regarding the enlightening panel discussion. He emphasised on Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea's statements about South Asia being the least integrated region in the world and the remarks regarding the centrality of Bangladesh in the region. Mr Ahmed also echoed Ambassador Humayun Kabir's statements to look forward to having more initiatives. Mr Ahmed hoped that the book would be a good reason for all scholars and planners to sit together and look seriously and thoughtfully at the realities around and requirements inside the country so that real good can be done for the nation and the region.



RESPONSE FROM THE EDITOR OF THE BOOK



Dr Sreeradha Datta

Professor

O P Jindal Global University, India

Professor Dr Sreeradha Datta in her response stated that she hesitated to have a bilateral chapter on Myanmar due to the fluidity of the situation. In this regard, she referred that Don McLain Gill's chapter looked at Southeast Asia and Bangladesh where different issues and complexities are discussed, including the Rohingya issue. On the issue of domestic politics and foreign policy, she said she did not want to make it repetitive since in her earlier book 'Bangladesh at 50', she wrote two detailed chapters on both the domestic aspect, foreign policy and the challenges that it poses for Bangladesh. She repeated that this book constantly refers to

the foreign policy dictum of the Father of the Nation which says friendship with all.

At this point, Professor Datta shared an example from her experience. When she initiated a dialogue between India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, she found it easy to get Bangladesh government and foreign ministry of India on board. However, it is extremely difficult in the case of Myanmar. She said that despite critical relations with Myanmar, Bangladesh was never reluctant to be a part. She used this as an example to highlight the implementation of Bangladesh's foreign policy dictum. This is a testament of Bangladesh's perception and approach which have been built over the years. She highlighted that there is no denying that leadership have a contribution in this regard. As Professor Datta approached the end of her deliberation, she resonated with the comments regarding emerging challenges, both in the leadership context and in the domestic context which is going to reflect on Bangladesh's foreign policy journey. She concluded by thanking Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea, Ms Ramita Iyer and ISAS for their support in this project.

REMARKS BY THE CHIEF GUEST



Dr AK Abdul Momen, MP

*Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh*

Dr A K Abdul Momen, MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thanked BISS for inviting him to the book launching ceremony. He said the book 'Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity' is a testament that Bangladesh is on the road to achieving the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream of 'Sonar Bangla' by maintaining a prosperous, peaceful, and stable economy under the dynamic leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He then described Bengal's rich history and tradition, as a supplier of elegance (resources) to the rest of India. In Bengal, the campaign of humanity commenced long before the Western world, as early as 1408, when Chandidas of Bengal advocated the concept that "Humanity is above all" ("সবার উপরে মানুষ সত্য তাহার উপরে নাই"). This was well ahead of significant Western events, such as the discovery of America in 1492 or the European Renaissance in the 17th century. Unsurprisingly, luminaries like Professor Gopal Krishna Gokhale, echoed by others like Sarojini Naidu, stated, "What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow."

Dr Momen said that historically, both the All India Congress and the All-India Muslim League, which spearheaded the independence movement of the Indian subcontinent, initiated their journeys in Bengal in 1885 and 1906, respectively. Being a prosperous region, Bengal contributed nearly 25 per cent of the global wealth, attracting various foreign powers, including the Mughals, Mongols, Persians, Arabs, Portuguese, and eventually the British, who ruled and exploited the region for over 190 years, leaving it impoverished. However, Bangabandhu always harboured a belief in the potential of Bengal, envisioning a "Sonar Bangla" (Golden Bengal). Bangladesh, despite having mighty challenges, achieved remarkable economic growth over the last 15 years with an average of over 6.6 per cent GDP growth rate, reduced poverty by more than half, and achieved significant successes in all socio-economic indicators and pushed its life expectancy to around 73 years. This is a remarkable progress no wonder. Bangladesh, once termed as the 'bottomless basket' by the Western pandits, is now a vibrant economy and a land of opportunities. In addition, it is becoming the ninth largest global marketplace and an attractive destination for foreign investment. Currently, Bangladesh is playing an active part in regional initiatives, and it has become a hub of regional connectivity as it believes that 'connectivity aids productivity'. Being the 33rd largest economy and soon to be the 25th largest economy, Bangladesh is emerging as an important player in regional and global geopolitics.

Dr Momen believes this book demonstrates that the world is taking notice of Bangladesh's triumphs and successes. To him, it explores Bangladesh's increasing importance in the region and across the world. It highlights Bangladesh's standout economic achievements and its transition from a low-income to a middle-income country with great potential. He emphasised the critical drivers of Bangladesh's growth, which include investment in human development and significant infrastructures, notably the Padma Bridge. This infrastructure project aims to increase the nation's GDP by 1.24 per cent. However, the speaker pointed out a missing element in the discourse and there he highlighted the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He stressed the Premier's determination to realise Bangladesh's vision of 'Sonar Bangla' by establishing an innovative, digital Bangladesh by 2041. He underscored that properly utilising resources such as agriculture, RMG, and skilled workforce has been crucial in achieving significant success. He further suggested that with its abundant water resources, Bangladesh could become a global supplier of fresh drinking water and freshwater fish.

Dr Momen then moved on to discuss Bangladesh's foreign policy, which is built on the concept of 'friendship to all, malice towards none', as enunciated by Bangabandhu. He also strongly emphasised peace and stability by saying that "peace is imperative for development", and wished that Bangladesh would be the Switzerland of the East.

Dr Momen strongly said that Bangladesh does not want any proxy war in the Asian region. Following Bangabandhu's footsteps, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina solidified Bangladesh's relationship with all its neighbouring countries like India, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and additionally included Malaysia, Singapore, and Myanmar. Bangladesh has demonstrated commitment to fostering regional cohesion through active participation in all regional initiatives, including BIMSTEC, SAARC, IORA, etc, and it took a global leadership role in climate change issues, peacekeeping, and regional security. Bangladesh also maintains an excellent relationship with Southeast Asia, ASEAN, the Muslim world, the European Union, the Commonwealth, and the major powers of the world, especially the United States of America. Despite acknowledging the persistent challenges that Bangladesh faces, the book maintains an optimistic outlook regarding Bangladesh's future progress.



Dr Momen reminisced that during his tenure as foreign minister, the Prime Minister laid down a few roadmaps to make Bangladesh a developing country by 2021, a hunger-free country by 2030, and a smart Bangladesh by 2041. Given the geostrategic location and the nature of the demography, Bangladesh needs to make the most use of its young population and its resources. He informed the audience that Bangladesh has developed three packages i.e., economic diplomacy, public diplomacy, and regional peace and stability. Dr Momen stated that the economic diplomacy package consists of five components i.e., increasing and diversifying FDI portfolio, increasing trade and diversifying products and markets, increasing human resources and ensuring employment in both home and abroad, technology transfer for improving the ease of doing business, and finally providing quality services.

Emphasis is laid on investment, trade, and efforts to fully engage Bangladesh's human resources by creating quality jobs. Dr Momen then stated that the public diplomacy initiatives are designed to change the brand name of Bangladesh from a poor and starving country to a land of opportunity in order to attract foreign direct investment and also to tell the rest of the world, mainly the western world that Bangladesh is the only country in the world that sacrificed three million lives to uphold democracy, justice, human rights, and human dignity. He then stated that the regional peace and stability package is designed to bring peace and stability to the region so that our economic achievements can be sustainable.

Dr Momen then provided an example of how Bangladesh and India benefit from peace and stability. Nearly 2.8 million Bangladeshis visit India for shopping, studying, or medical treatment, contributing to and assisting the Indian economy. Additionally, several hundred thousand Indians currently work in Bangladesh, contributing to



its economy while reducing the burden on India's foreign exchange reserves. Furthermore, because of peace and stability, India does not have to allocate substantial amount of currency to defend its eastern borders.

Dr Momen then proposed to the authors to write a book on the economic and social benefits of peacefully resolving issues through dialogue and discussion as Bangladesh and India's rock-solid relationship has achieved. He then drew examples from when Bangladesh and India resolved the border demarcation issues, the maritime boundary issue, and the water sharing disputes through dialogue and peaceful discussion. Dr Momen referred this as a unique example of achieving the well-being of people of both countries.

Dr Momen then expressed hope that Bangladesh can showcase to the rest of the world that such feats are achievable with the right mindset, maturity, and political acumen. As noted by many authors in the book, Bangladesh's rise and its successes have yet to be studied, especially in the West, and this book will make a significant contribution towards filling that void. He then emphasised that this book offers valuable insights into the nation's diplomatic endeavours; it allows the readers to see how the global academic community sees the rise of Bangladesh and analyse what the next steps will be for Bangladesh. Dr Momen concluded his speech by congratulating again the editor and the authors of the book.

CONCLUDING REMARKS



Ambassador A F M Gousal Azam Sarker
Chairman
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS)

Ambassador A F M Gousal Azam Sarker, Chairman, BISS said that the unveiling of the book was a journey of exploration into the intricate fabric of Bangladesh's international relations and strategic position. He mentioned that through meticulous research, analysis and profound understanding of the geopolitical landscape, Dr Sreeradha Datta and the authors of the book have illuminated the path forward for Bangladesh as it navigates the complexities of a rapidly transformative world. At the heart of this book lies a narrative of resilience, determination, and ambition, the architect of which is the

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It chronicles Bangladesh's journey to a regional powerhouse, poised to make its mark on the global stage. From its strategic location at the crossroads of the eastern subcontinent to its burgeoning economic prowess, Bangladesh stands on the cusp of a new era of influence and prominence.

Ambassador Sarker emphasised that the book is more than just a celebration of past achievements. It is a call to action for the future. He further said that as we reflect on the insights gleaned from its pages, let us not rest on our laurels, but instead redouble our efforts to shape a brighter tomorrow. Let us harness the lessons learned and the knowledge gained to forge new partnerships, explore new avenues of cooperation, and confront the challenges that lie ahead with courage, conviction and passion that Dr Sreeradha Datta has demonstrated about Bangladesh. Ambassador Sarkar suggested to carry forward the spirit of inquiry and hard work for a better future of Bangladesh.

VOTE OF THANKS



A S M Shamsul Arefin

Chairman, Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies (BFRS)

Mr A S M Shamsul Arefin, Chairman, Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies (BFRS) expressed that the book ‘Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving Beyond the Regional Identity’ shows how Bangladesh is projected internationally. Over the last 14 to 15 years, Bangladesh has displayed a new dimension of growth and efficiently managed challenges under the dynamic leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Bangladesh has proven to the world that it can do something. The people are the main driving force behind this developmental journey. Through this book, people can get multiple views regarding how Bangladesh has been projected

by writers, thinkers, academicians and researchers. Mr Arefin expressed that this was eye-opening for him. It is also eye-opening for Bangladeshi academicians as it will show them how the world is thinking about Bangladesh. This is an achievement. There can be a lot of shortcomings but those can be improved. Mr Arefin expressed that he is honoured to organise this book launching ceremony in collaboration with BISS and present this book to the people of Bangladesh and to the wider audience of the world. He shared that it is important to project Bangladesh in front of the world and share thoughts regarding what Bangladesh can do and how Bangladesh can go ahead with its people under the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and with the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



EDITORIAL BOARD

Chief Editor

Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan

Director General

Editor

Mohammad Jasim Uddin

Research Director

Assistant Editors

Mohammad Ashique Rahman, Senior Research Fellow

Ayesha Binte Towhid, Research Fellow

Md Rafid Abrar Miah, Research Officer

The Editorial Team thankfully acknowledges Farzana Fatima, Research Officer, Fahim Shahriar, Azdika Afsana, and Tahsin Binte Hasan, Research Interns for thier assistance in preparing the proceedings.

• **Books**

- South Asian Regional Cooperation: A Socio-economic Approach to Peace and Stability (1985)
- Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect (1986)
- The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (1986)
- The Security of Small States (1987)
- ASEAN Experiences of Regional and Inter-regional Cooperation: Relevance for SAARC (1988)
- Development, Politics and Security: Third World Context (1990)
- Bangladesh and SAARC: Issues, Perspectives and Outlook (1992)
- Bangladesh: Society, Polity and Economy (1993)
- South Asia's Security: Primacy of Internal Dimension (1994)
- Chandabaji Versus Entrepreneurship: Youth Force in Bangladesh (1999)
- Development Cooperation at the Dawn of the Twenty First Century: Bangladesh-German Partnership in Perspective (2000)
- Conflict Management and Sub-regional Co-operation in ASEAN: Relevance of SAARC (2000)
- National Security of Bangladesh in the 21st Century (2000)
- Civil Society and Democracy in Bangladesh (2002)
- Regional Co-operation in South Asia: New Dimensions and Perspectives (2002)
- Confidence Building Measures and Security Cooperation in South Asia : Challenges in the New Century (2002)
- Bangladesh-Southeast Asia Relations: Some Insights (2002)
- Security in the Twenty First Century: A Bangladesh Perspective (2003)
- 25 Years of BIISS: An Anthology (2003)
- Politics and Security in South Asia: Salience of Religion and Culture (2004)
- Small States and Regional Stability in South Asia (2005)
- Religious Militancy and Security in South Asia (2006)
- Global War on Terror: Bangladesh Perspective (2007)
- Towards BIMSTEC-Japan Comprehensive Economic Cooperation: Bangladesh Perspective (2007) Democracy, Governance and Security Reforms: Bangladesh Context (2008)
- Whither National Security Bangladesh 2007 (2008)
- National Security Bangladesh 2008 (2009)
- Human Security Approach to Counter Extremism in South Asia: Relevance of Japanese Culture (2010)
- National Security Bangladesh 2009 (2010)
- Energy Security in South Asia Plus: Relevance of Japanese Experience (2016)
- Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy (2018)
- Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Discourses from Japan and Beyond (2019)
- Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: An Epic of a Nation's Emergence and Emancipation (2021)
- Militancy and National Security of Bangladesh: Policy Options and Strategic Outlook (2021)
- Glimpses on Bangladesh : A Country of Hope, Love, Courage and Resilience (2022)
- Development Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas (2024)

- **South Asia Human Security Series**

Nepali State, Society and Human Security : An Infinite Discourse (2008)
 Evolving Security Discourse in Sri Lanka: From National Security to Human Security (2008)
 Violence, Terrorism and Human Security in South Asia (2008)
 Women and Human Security in South Asia: The Cases of Bangladesh and Pakistan (2008)
 Human Security in India: Health, Shelter and Marginalisation (2010)
 Pakistan: Haunting Shadows of Human Security (2009)
 Human Security in India: Discourse, Practices and Policy Implications (2010)
 Human Security Index for South Asia: Exploring Relevant Issues (2011)
 Ethnicity and Human Security in Bangladesh and Pakistan (2012)

- **BIISS Papers (Monograph Series)**

The Assam Tangle : Outlook for the Future (1984)
 The Crisis in Lebanon: Multi-dimensional Aspects and Outlook for the Future (1985)
 India's Policy Fundamentals, Neighbours and Post-Indira Developments (1985)
 Strategic Aspects of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations (1986)
 Indo-Bangladesh Common Rivers and Water Diplomacy (1986)
 Gulf War : The Issues Revisited (1987)
 The SAARC in Progress : A Hesitant Course of South Asian Transition (1988)
 Post-Brezhnev Soviet Policy Towards the Third World (1988)
 Changing Faces of Socialism (1989)
 Sino-Indian Quest for Rapprochement: Implications for South Asia (1989)
 Intifada : The New Dimension to Palestinian Struggle (1990)
 Bangladesh : Towards National Consensus (in Banerjee, 1990)
 Environmental Challenges to Bangladesh (1991)
 The Gulf War and the New World Order : Implication for the Third World (1992)
 Challenges of Governance in India : Fundamentals under Threat (1995)
 Bangladesh in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (1998)
 Nuclearisation of South Asia : Challenges and Options for Bangladesh (1998)
 The Middle East Peace Process and the Palestinian Statehood (2000)
 Pakistan and Bangladesh : From Conflict to Cooperation (2003)
 Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Bangladesh : A Case for People's Management (2003)
 WTO Dispute Settlement System and Developing Countries: A Neorealist Critique (2004)
 State Sovereignty and Humanitarian Intervention : Does One Negate the Other? (2006)
 Unipolarity and Weak States: The Case of Bangladesh (2009)
 Japan's Strategic Rise (2010)
 The Fallacy of Fragile States Indices: Is There a Fragility Trap (2017)
 Implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative for Bangladesh: A Strategic Analysis (2020)
 Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience: A Quest for Human Security in Bangladesh (2020)
 Information Disorder In the Information Age: Actors, Tactics, and Impacts in South and Southeast Asia (2020)
 Covid-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh: Economic Impacts and Policy Implications (2020)
 Understanding Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy: Principles, Priorities and Diplomatic Strategies (2021)
 Repatriation of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals: Political Security and Humanitarian Assistance (2022)

• **BIISS Seminar Proceedings**

- Contemporary Development Debate: Bangladesh in the Global Context (2014)
- Moving from MDGs to SDGs: Bangladesh Experience and Expectation (2015)
- SAARC at 30: Achievements, Potentials and Challenges (2015)
- Bangladesh's Relations with Latin American Countries: Unlocking Potentials (2016)
- Civil-Military Relations in Democracy: An Effective Framework (2016)
- Recent Extremist Violence in Bangladesh: Response Options (2016)
- 25 March — Gonohottya Dibosh (Genocide Day) (2017)
- Reconciling Divided Societies, Building Democracy and Good Governance: Lessons from Sri Lanka (2017)
- Promoting Cultural Diversity of Small Ethnic Groups in Bangladesh (2017)
- Upcoming 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, Dhaka: Revisiting A Shared Journey (2018)
- রোহিঙ্গা সংকটঃ বাংলাদেশ কর্তৃক গ্রহীত পদক্ষেপ ও পর্যালোচনা (Rohingya Crisis: Measures Taken by Bangladesh and Appraisal) (2018)
- Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (2018)
- Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Experience from Japan (2018)
- Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100: Implementation, Challenges and Way Forward (2019)
- 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh (2019)
- Bangladesh-India Cooperation: In the Changing Regional and Global Context (2019)
- Commemorating the Silver Jubilee of Diplomatic Relation Between South Africa and Bangladesh (2019)
- International Day of Peace 2019 and Launching of Book Titled “Bangladesh in International Peacebuilding: Discourses from Japan and Beyond” (2020)
- Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative for the Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh (2020)
- Bangladesh-Nepal Relations: Prospects for Sub-regional Cooperation (2020)
- Bangladesh and India: A Promising Future (2020)
- Track 1.5 BIMSTEC Security Dialogue Forum (2020)
- Bangabandhu's The Unfinished Memoirs: A Review (2020)
- ASEM Day: Celebrating and For Strengthening Connectivity (2020)
- Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Bangladesh: Options for Building Resilience (2020)
- Leadership of Bangabandhu and Its Relevance to the Contemporary World (2021)
- Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: Leadership and Foreign Policy (2021)
- Bangabandhu's Vision of Sonar Bangla: Bangladesh at 50 (2021)
- The Rohingya Crisis: Response of the International Community and the Repatriation Process (2021)
- Revisiting Contemporary Peace and Security Challenges in the South Region (2021)
- Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: An Epic of a Nation's Emergence and Emancipation (2021)

• **BIISS Seminar Proceedings**

- Exploring Korea-Bangladesh Relations in the Last Five Decades and Beyond (2021)
- The Rohingya Exodus in Bangladesh: Regional and Global Security Implications (2021)
- Bangladesh-South Africa Bilateral Relations: Exploring the Potentials for Future Engagement and Cooperation (2021)
- Geopolitics of Indo-Pacific and Reconnecting the Bay of Bengal Littorals (2022)
- Human Rights in the 21st Century: Rhetoric and Reality (2022)
- Roundtable Discussion with H.E. Michele J. Sison, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, US Department of State and Her Delegation (2022)
- Bangladesh and the United States Relations: Moving Towards Enhanced Cooperation and Partnership (2022)
- Hybrid Seminar on Blue Economy and Maritime Security: Bangladesh Perspective (2022)
- Bangladesh-India Relations: Confluence of Ideologies and Evolving Perspectives (2022)
- The EU in the Indo-Pacific: A Committed Partner for Stability, Prosperity and Peace (2022)
- Bangabandhu's Vision: Relevance in the Context of 21st Century (2022)
- Climate Diplomacy: Constraints and Choices for Bangladesh (2022)
- Bangladesh-Portugal Relations Quest for Deeper Bilateral Cooperation (2022)
- Changing Global Order Securing Bangladesh's National Interest (2022)
- New Frontiers of Human Rights Climate Justice in Perspective (2022)
- Hybrid Seminar on Look Africa: Exploring New Horizons for Bangladesh (2022)
- Hybrid Seminar on Promoting Multilateral Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (2022)
- BIISS Research Colloquium 2022 (2022)
- Celebrating 50 Years of Bangladesh-Nepal Friendship: Shared Vision of Peace, Progress and Prosperity (2023)
- Roundtable Discussion with Senior Director Eileen Laubacher, Senior Director for South Asia, United States National Security Council (USNSC) (2023)
- Seminar on Gig Economy and Bangladesh: Opportunities, Challenges and Way Forward (2023)
- Evolving Strategic Scenario in the Bay of Bengal Region: Bangladesh Perspective (2023)
- Seminar on Contemporary Bangladesh: Security and Economic Perspectives (2023)
- International Seminar on Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook: Opportunities and Way Forward (2023)
- Roundtable Discussion on Bangladesh's Strategic Autonomy: Participation in International/Regional Organisations including BRICS (2024)
- Seminar on The Rohingya Crisis: Contemporary Security Dimensions and Future of Repatriation Process (2024)
- Roundtable Discussion on Strategic Autonomy of Bangladesh: Alternative Trading Arrangements (2024)
- Interactive Session on Rohingya: Repatriation Process (2024)
- Seminar on Global Economic Slowdown Bangladesh's Apparel Industry and Decent Work (2024)
- Proceedings on the Regional Workshop on Bluer, Greener and Inclusive Growth in the Sundarban through an Ecosystem-based Approach (2024)
- Seminar on Economic Diversification and Global Market: Bangladesh's Opportunities and Way Forward (2024)

• **BIISS Country Lecture Series**

BIISS Country Lecture Series: Part- 1

BIISS Country Lecture Series: Part- 2



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) is an autonomous statutory institution established in 1978 by the Government of Bangladesh. The main responsibilities of the Institute are to undertake study, research, and dissemination of knowledge on international relations as well as national affairs and state policy related to security, defence, foreign relations, international peace, security, and strategic aspects.

The priority areas of the Institute's research activities are: foreign policy, security and strategic issues with specific relevance for Bangladesh; regional, inter-regional and international cooperation; conflict studies, peace keeping, disarmament, non-proliferation and area studies. Contemporary issues of global and South Asian security are also the focus of research activities of the Institute.

The Institute provides necessary assistance as per the demand of the Government in the formulation of projects and policies of related matters and their implementations. The Institute also establishes working forum for acquiring further knowledge of relevant national and international issues and policies, and facilitating exchange of knowledge and views between officials engaged in the work of the Government. To fulfil its objective of knowledge generation, the Institute carries out exchange of information, opinions, and materials with other institutions and scholars engaged in research in the country and abroad on the above-mentioned subject areas. The Institute also acts as an archive for the study and research on international affairs and strategic studies.

The general guidance and superintendence of the Institute's affairs are vested upon the Board of Governors, headed by a Chairman and consisting of representatives of government ministries, armed forces, academics and professionals. The Director General, the Chief Executive of the Institute, is also the Member-Secretary of the Board. Research activities of the Institute are carried out by the Research Faculty consisting of a team of full-time researchers with varied social sciences background.

Mailing Address

1/46, Old Elephant Road (West of Ramna Police Station), Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
Fax: 88-02-48312625, info@biiss.org, website: www.biiss.org