

“Friendship Builds Trust, Trust Creates Opportunity”: SIPG–NSU Seminar Calls for Turning Bangladesh–China Commitments into Results

Dhaka, 26 July 2026: "Partnerships are most meaningful when they reinforce national priorities-placing Bangladesh's development, economic sovereignty, and people's welfare at the center of every collaboration." said Dr. Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Adviser, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Bangladesh, in a seminar organized by The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University (NSU).



The seminar titled “Bangladesh-China Relations: Enhanced Trust and New Direction” brought together policymakers, diplomats, scholars, China experts, media representatives, faculty members, and students to discuss how Bangladesh could transform the renewed momentum of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman’s recent Beijing visit into concrete gains in diplomacy, trade, connectivity, education, technology, and regional cooperation.

Dr. Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Adviser with the status of Minister, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning, Prime Minister’s Office, Government of Bangladesh, attended the seminar as Chief Guest. Referring to the principle of “Shobar Agey Bangladesh”, he emphasized that Bangladesh must pursue its own self-reliant development journey while engaging China on the basis of mutual respect, national interest, and economic sovereignty. He welcomed Chinese partnerships in multimodal transportation, the Chinese Economic Zone in Chattogram, Mongla Port expansion, and the proposed Kunming-Chattogram connection, while calling for deeper society-to-society cultural exchanges.



H.E. Mr. Asad Alam Siam, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, reflected on the positive trajectory of Bangladesh-China relations and highlighted recent milestones, including agreements, protocols, media cooperation, and cooperation in agriculture, water security, supply chains, technology, and multilateral forums. He stressed that the real task ahead was converting commitments and



investments into high-impact projects backed by strong institutional accountability and aligned with Bangladesh's national interest.



Representing the Embassy of China in Bangladesh, Mr. Li Shaopeng, Cultural Counselor, described the Prime Minister's visit to China as the beginning of a new chapter in bilateral relations. "People matter more than infrastructure. Long-term people-to-people bonds matter more than physical connectivity," he emphasized political mutual trust, international coordination, and shared development as central foundations of Bangladesh-China cooperation. Highlighting the importance of people-oriented cooperation, he observed that human connections, vocational education, Chinese language learning, and cultural exchanges carry value beyond infrastructure connectivity.



Ambassador Mohammad Sufiur Rahman, Senior Research Fellow at SIPG, NSU, presented the keynote paper. He argued that Bangladesh must move beyond a narrow project-based understanding of China relations and focus on long-term strategic planning. He stressed that sustainable cooperation should not depend only on

short-term monetary interests, but should place geoeconomics, health, education, research, technology, connectivity, and mutual security at the centre of future engagement.

Dr. Liu Zongyi, Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Center for South Asia Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), China, joined the seminar as the lead discussant.

Speakers observed that Bangladesh-China relations had moved beyond conventional development cooperation and entered a wider strategic phase. They emphasized that the next challenge for Bangladesh would be to translate diplomatic understandings into visible outcomes, while protecting national interest, economic sovereignty, and strategic autonomy.



Mr. Benjir Ahmed, Member of the Board of Trustees of North South University, also addressed the seminar. Capturing the spirit of the discussion, he stated, “Friendship builds trust, trust creates opportunity, and opportunity shapes the future.” He emphasized that Bangladesh-China relations should move beyond business and infrastructure to include higher education, research, agriculture, technology, student exchanges, and human connections.

Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of North South University, delivered the closing remarks and vote of thanks. He highlighted the growing diplomatic trajectory between China and South Asia and emphasized the need to expand Bangladesh’s export basket to China.



The seminar also discussed the proposed Bangladesh-China-Myanmar connectivity framework, BCM+I, the Teesta and northern river management issues, the Rohingya crisis, Myanmar's instability, Bay of Bengal geopolitics, Indo-Pacific competition, and Bangladesh's need to avoid overdependence on any single partner. Speakers emphasized that Bangladesh should remain open to cooperation with all countries on mutually beneficial terms while carefully navigating the fast-changing regional and global environment.



Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director of SIPG, NSU, moderated the seminar and delivered the opening remarks. The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. S. M. Rubyat, Coordinator of CSCSS and Assistant Professor at NSU.

The event reaffirmed SIPG and NSU's commitment to advancing evidence-based policy dialogue on Bangladesh's foreign relations, regional cooperation, and strategic engagement in a changing global order.

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