

 Bay of Bengal
Conversation

FRAGMENTS • FRONTIERS • FUTURES

3-5 OCTOBER 2026 • DHAKA

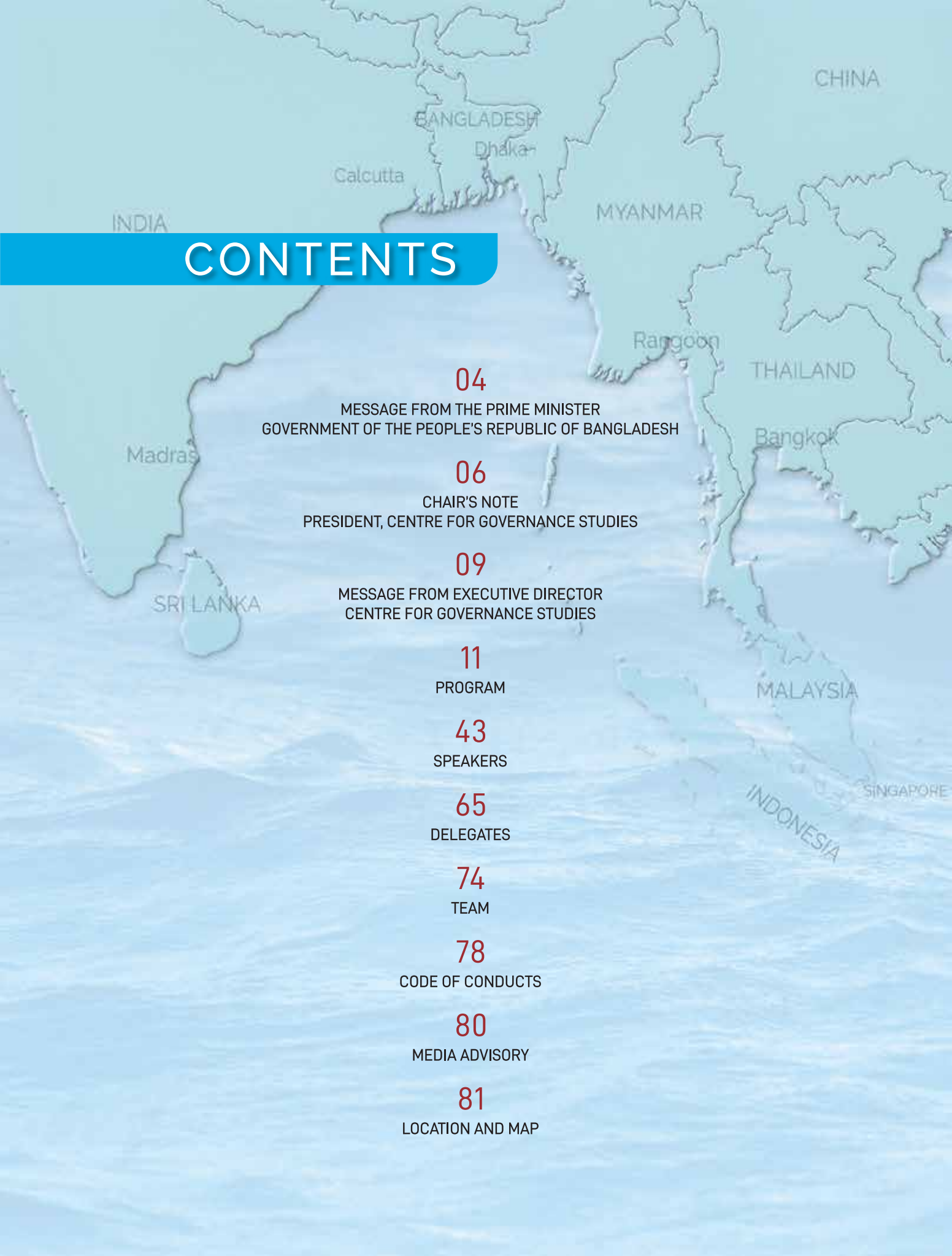
NAVIGATING POWER, TECHNOLOGY AND TRUST IN A WORLD REWRITTEN



3-5 OCTOBER 2026 • DHAKA

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AND TRUST IN A WORLD REWRITTEN

This booklet was prepared by compiling information from event participants, speakers, and other important organizing partners. Although great care was taken in editing and releasing the book, inadvertent human mistakes are possible and occasionally inevitable. Because the speaker's schedule and other components of the program are subject to change at any time, the schedule and agenda published in this book may differ from actuality. The most recent agenda may be found at bayofbengalconversation.cgs-bd.com/agenda. Kindly inform us at ed@cgs-bd.com of any publication or factual mistakes.

A light blue map of South and Southeast Asia serves as the background. It shows the outlines of India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Major cities like Calcutta, Dhaka, Rangoon, Bangkok, Madras, and Singapore are labeled. A solid blue horizontal bar is positioned across the upper left portion of the map.

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PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

09 September 2026
25 Bhadro 1433

MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to welcome distinguished speakers, delegates, policymakers, diplomats, scholars, business leaders, journalists, civil society representatives and young leaders from Bangladesh and across the globe to the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 in Dhaka.

This year's theme, "FRAGMENTS • FRONTIERS • FUTURES: Navigating Power, Technology and Trust in a World Rewritten," captures the profound global transformations taking place today. The international order is being reshaped by geopolitical competition, technological disruption, economic realignment, climate change, conflict and mounting pressure on public trust. Yet, such uncertainty offers a vital opportunity to question old assumptions, build strategic partnerships and choose cooperation over confrontation.

These dynamics carry profound significance for Bangladesh. Situated at the junction of South and Southeast Asia, at the heart of the Bay of Bengal, our nation has historically served as a meeting point for trade, ideas and cultures. Today, our geographic location places us at the centre of major strategic and economic shifts. The Bay of Bengal is a shared space whose future hinges on maritime security, trade, energy, climate resilience, digital transformation and cross-border cooperation.

Bangladesh pursues constructive, friendly engagement with all nations founded on sovereign equality, mutual respect, shared benefit and non-interference. While our national interest and citizens' welfare guide our foreign policy, global issues like climate change, cyber threats, economic shocks, and emerging technologies demand responsible multilateralism and regional action.

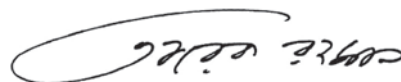
Domestically, our government remains committed to building a democratic, accountable, inclusive and humane Bangladesh. We are focused on strengthening institutions, upholding the rule of law, broadening economic opportunities, and ensuring every citizen lives with dignity. We seek a competitive economy that drives employment, fosters innovation, attracts responsible investment and integrates deeply with global markets. Crucially, economic progress and environmental stewardship must go hand in hand through robust climate adaptation and sustainable development.

Technology represents another defining frontier. While artificial intelligence and digital connectivity offer vast possibilities, they also raise pressing challenges regarding inequality, job security, misinformation, and privacy. Technological advancement must remain fundamentally human-centred, contributing to a fairer and more peaceful world.

Achieving these ambitions requires collective efforts. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) for convening this forum. Bringing together voices from over 100 countries underscores Bangladesh's readiness to act as a global link for constructive dialogue. I encourage all delegates to use these three days to map out actionable pathways forward. Our differences need not hinder dialogue, nor should competition prevent cooperation.

Bangladesh envisions a future where nations, large and small, pursue their legitimate interests while respecting the sovereignty and dignity of others; where economic growth is equitably shared; technology serves humanity; democratic institutions inspire confidence; and dialogue prevails over division.

I extend a warm welcome to our international guests and wish the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 every success.



Tarique Rahman



CHAIR'S NOTE

President, Centre for Governance Studies

Welcome to the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026.

As we gather in Dhaka for the fifth edition of this forum, I am reminded of a simple truth: the world is changing faster than our institutions, assumptions and habits of cooperation can comfortably absorb.

Power is shifting. Technology is reshaping economies, politics and everyday life. Climate pressures are intensifying. Trust in institutions is under strain. Old alliances are being tested, while new partnerships are emerging. Across regions, societies are asking difficult questions about security, prosperity, representation, dignity and the future.

This is the world in which the Bay of Bengal Conversation takes place. Our theme this year - FRAGMENTS • FRONTIERS • FUTURES: Navigating Power, Technology and Trust in a World Rewritten - reflects that reality.

From the beginning, our ambition has been to create an international platform that is rooted in the Bay, connected to the world and focused on the future.

We live in a time of fragments: between states, within societies, across generations and between institutions and the people they serve. We are also standing at new frontiers: technological, economic, geopolitical and human. And yet, our future remains open. They are not predetermined. They will be shaped by the decisions we make, the partnerships we build and, perhaps most importantly, by the quality of the conversations we are willing to have. That is why BoBC exists.

From the beginning, our ambition has been to create an international platform that is rooted in the Bay, connected to the world and focused on the future. We wanted to build a space where political leaders, diplomats, policymakers, businesspeople, academics, journalists, civil society leaders, innovators and emerging voices could meet without the constraints of conventional silos. Not everyone in these rooms will agree. They should not.

A serious conversation is not one in which differences disappear. It is one in which differences can be expressed honestly, examined carefully and understood more deeply. This year, more than 200 speakers, 300 delegates and over 1,000 participants from more than 100 countries are expected to join us in Dhaka. Their backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are remarkably diverse. That diversity is not incidental to the Conversation; it is its strength.

Over three days, we will explore five broad areas that are shaping our world: power and strategic competition; technology and information; trade, connectivity and economic transformation; climate, resilience and human security; and trust, democracy and the future of governance. But BoBC is not simply a collection of panels.

The conversations between sessions matter too. A question asked in a smaller room, an unexpected exchange over coffee, a disagreement at a roundtable, or a new connection made over dinner can sometimes have as much value as what happens on the main stage.

We have therefore designed BoBC 2026 to accommodate different forms of conversation—from large plenaries and Leadership Forums to Strategic Dialogues, intimate invitation-only exchanges, Spotlight addresses and informal encounters. At the center of all this is the Bay of Bengal itself.

For too long, the Bay has often been viewed primarily through the language of geography or strategy. Yet it is much more than a body of water on a map. It connects economies, cultures, histories and communities. It carries trade, livelihoods, migration, opportunity and risk. It sits at the intersection of South Asia, Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific.

What happens here increasingly matters far beyond our shores. Bangladesh, therefore, is not simply hosting an international conference. Dhaka is becoming a meeting place for ideas from different parts of the world. That is an aspiration we take seriously.

For too long, the Bay has often been viewed primarily through the language of geography or strategy. Yet it is much more than a body of water on a map.

The Centre for Governance Studies has always believed that independent platforms matter. In a fragmented world, spaces where people can listen to one another—especially when they disagree—are becoming more, no less, important. The Bay of Bengal Conversation is our contribution to that effort.

I am deeply grateful to our speakers, delegates, partners, supporters, colleagues and volunteers who have made this fifth edition possible. Many have travelled long distances to join us. Others have contributed ideas, resources, time and trust.

I also want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of the CGS and BoBC team. A forum of this scale is built through thousands of small decisions, countless conversations and an enormous amount of commitment behind the scenes.

To everyone joining us in Dhaka, I have one request: come with curiosity. Listen beyond your own assumptions. Ask the difficult question. Engage with someone whose experience is different from yours. Challenge ideas but remain open to changing your own.

Three days will not resolve the world's conflicts or answer every question before us. That is not our expectation. But if we leave Dhaka with a better understanding of one another, a few assumptions reconsidered, and new possibilities for cooperation, then the Conversation will have served its purpose.

The future remains unwritten. Let the Conversation begin.



Zillur Rahman

President, Centre for Governance Studies (CGS)
Chair, Bay of Bengal Conversation



PARVEZ KARIM ABBASI

Executive Director, Centre for Governance Studies

As Executive Director of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), it is my privilege and honor to welcome you all to the fifth iteration of the Bay of Bengal Conversation – the largest organized conference on Geopolitics and Geoeconomics in South Asia. This year's conference theme- Fragments, Frontiers & Futures is apropos, as it reflects the ongoing profound structural transformation that is taking place around the world, ranging from trade, technology, diplomacy, and even the nature and conduct of warfare. We have witnessed the acceleration of the deglobalization process, the re-emergence of Neomercantilism and coercive trade policies and zero-sum trade wars, the renewed emphasis on regional bloc formations, and a resurgence of international conflicts and proxy wars with disastrous effects on maritime shipping routes and connectivity and disruption of global supply chains of energy-related commodities. Countries have engaged in the weaponization of rare earth and critical minerals, leveraging access to exert pressure on competitors and potential adversaries.

The advent of disruptive technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Computing and their practical applications have outpaced the regulatory capabilities of most states. Meanwhile, trust in multilateral bodies and institutions amongst states and their citizens is at an all-time low. Instead of adherence to internationally agreed-upon norms and laws, smaller nations are often on the receiving end of the "Might is Right" dictum. Democratic backsliding and electoral autocracies have become more common than ever before. Liberal democracy, with its emphasis on inclusivity, tolerance, and a culture of healthy debate and disagreement, is increasingly under siege. Dissenting opinions and differing visions are increasingly being virulently attacked, savagely ostracized, and harshly penalized and punished. The trust deficit between government and its citizens is widening in almost every country, big or small, rich or poor. Income and wealth inequality and reduced socioeconomic mobility remain largely unaddressed, thus breeding dissatisfaction and discontent in almost every nation.

Meanwhile, Global Warming and Climate Change and the risk that they pose to the livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people are being blithely ignored. Displacement

and the unimaginable suffering of the hapless civilian population due to state-sponsored genocide and conflict are quietly forgotten. Smaller states (in terms of economy, access to finance, technology, and military capabilities) are faced with the unwelcome and undesirable prospect of being coerced into taking sides in regional and global blocs and platforms. Multiple alignments to secure national interests of small states are not looked upon favorably by the bigger powers. A shared dream for global cooperation and prosperity now seems more like a well-worn cliché with little practical relevance or bearing.

Bangladesh has yet to leverage its unique geography of being positioned on the cusp of South and Southeast Asia. Neither has it been able to fully take advantage of it sitting at the top of the Bay of Bengal or as an important conduit within the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Bangladesh is yet to emulate the examples of Singapore and the United Arab Emirates acting as major regional trade, investment, and connectivity hubs. The democratic transition in Bangladesh has provided us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the body politic of the nation and to bring in meaningful changes in governance, trade, business, and, most importantly, bring about substantive beneficial changes in the lot of the ordinary people.

It is amidst all this gloom and doom that the Bay of Bengal Conversation acquires even greater salience. Every crisis not only poses a challenge, but also offers an opportunity to test our mettle, resilience, and creativity. As the world is in transition and the old order mutates and changes before our very eyes, Bangladesh can seize this opportunity to align with new trade partners, diversify exports, and adapt to new technologies and work methods. The conference has been specifically designed with the express intent of being an inclusive, non-aligned space that facilitates introspective and meaningful dialogue amongst representatives of various governments, businesses, researchers, civil society representatives, journalists, and young leaders with their Bangladeshi counterparts. The five strategic pillars of this year's conversation, namely: 1) Power in Transition 2) The Technology Frontier 3) The New Economic Geography 4) Climate, Resilience and Human Security 5) Trust, Democracy and the Future of Governance, are all issues of grave concern that Bangladesh and the rest of the world must address going forward. Over a hundred leading experts from around the world will be a part of the conference this year, interacting with the best and brightest of Bangladesh. If the resulting cerebral discussions and illuminating debates help in shaping the policy discourse in Bangladesh and help create a favorable impression on our neighbors, partners and allies and positively influence the manner in which they think, interact and evaluate us, then we at CGS would derive a measure of satisfaction. We remain committed to putting Bangladesh front and center in the regional and global geopolitical and geoeconomic discourse. I look forward to a very engaging, lively, and thought-provoking conference based on the invaluable contributions of the invited speakers and delegates.



Parvez Karim Abbasi



PROGRAM

09:30 - 10:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE OPENING ASSEMBLY

SPEAKERS

Parvez Karim Abbasi, Executive Director
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh

Zillur Rahman, President, CGS
Chair, Bay of Bengal Conversation, Bangladesh

Humaun Kobir, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

Tarique Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

10:30 - 11:15
OASIS

THE CONVERSATION BREAK

11:15 - 12:05
GRAND BALLROOM

THE FIRST CONVERSATION

A WORLD REWRITTEN

Power, Technology and Trust in the Age of Uncertainty

The international system is experiencing profound transformation. Traditional alliances are evolving, technological disruption is reshaping societies, and public trust in institutions is under strain. As geopolitical competition intensifies and global challenges become increasingly interconnected, leaders must reconsider how security, prosperity, and cooperation can be sustained. This first conversation will set the intellectual framework for the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 and explore the defining forces shaping the next decade.

SPEAKERS

Alexander Falck-Bilden, Deputy Head of Mission
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangladesh

Ali Riaz, Distinguished Professor, Illinois State University, USA

Boris Tadić, Former President, Republic of Serbia

Gordan Stojović, Member of Parliament, Montenegro

Shama Obaed Islam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

Charles Thomas Campbell, Editor-at-Large
TIME Magazine, Singapore (*Moderator*)

12:05 - 12:15
GRAND BALLROOM

LEADERSHIP FORUM

BANGLADESH BEYOND ITS BORDERS DIASPORA, IDENTITY AND A COUNTRY IN TRANSITION

The changing balance of global economic power has catalyzed perverse responses from the traditional dominant powers, which has contributed to instability and unpredictability across the international economic system, particularly for less empowered countries such as Bangladesh. Such responses may originate in structural factors which cannot be easily corrected globally or within the political economy of some of these countries. In such circumstances, our policymakers may need to explore more creative coping strategies which can strengthen resilience to navigate across this uncertain terrain and guide us in repositioning ourselves within the global economic landscape.

SPEAKER

Rupa Huq, Member of Parliament of the United Kingdom

12:15 - 13:05
GRAND BALLROOM

LEADERSHIP FORUM

POWER AND PRUDENCE

Managing Great-Power Competition Without Conflict

Strategic rivalry increasingly shapes international affairs. Yet history demonstrates the dangers of unmanaged competition. This discussion explores pathways for reducing tensions, preventing escalation, and sustaining dialogue amid growing geopolitical uncertainty.

SPEAKERS

A N M Muniruzzaman, President

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies

Arun Kumar Sahni, Former Army Commander, Indian Army

Carol Christine Fair, Professor, Georgetown University, USA

Dinesh Trivedi, Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh

Mustafa Osman Turan, Foreign Relations Advisor to the Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Türkiye

Faris Hadrovic, Managing Director, Cnsltng-Bsnss-Dvlpmnt, Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Moderator*)

13:05 - 13:15
GRAND BALLROOM

THE DIPLOMATIC LENS

Lulzim Pllana, Ambassador of Kosovo in Bangladesh

13:15 - 13:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE CATALYST

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DISORDER

Implications for Bangladesh

Connectivity today is about more than roads, ports, and trade routes; it is also about the networks of institutions, businesses, and markets that connect regions. As South Asia seeks new sources of growth and investment, stronger commercial links with the wider Commonwealth could create new opportunities in trade, finance, technology, and enterprise. This conversation will examine how regional business networks can move beyond political constraints, deepen practical cooperation, and translate connectivity into shared economic opportunity.

SPEAKER

Rehman

Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh

Sobhan

13:30 - 14:30
OASIS

THE MIDDAY TABLE

14:30 - 15:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE GRAND CONVERSATION

CORRIDORS OF INFLUENCE

Connectivity, Commerce, and Competition

Connectivity today is about more than roads, ports, and trade routes; it is also about the networks of institutions, businesses, and markets that connect regions. As South Asia seeks new sources of growth and investment, stronger commercial links with the wider Commonwealth could create new opportunities in trade, finance, technology, and enterprise. This conversation will examine how regional business networks can move beyond political constraints, deepen practical cooperation, and translate connectivity into shared economic opportunity.

SPEAKERS

Arif Zaman, Executive Director, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network, United Kingdom

Clay Goodloe Wescott, Consultant, World Bank, USA

Ghulam Mohammed Alomgir, Chairman, MAX Group, Bangladesh

Hossain Zillur Rahman, Executive Chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre, Bangladesh

Nilanthi Samaranayake, Adjunct Fellow
East-West Center in Washington, USA

David Patrician, Moderator, N-TV, Germany (*Moderator*)

15:30 - 15:40
GRAND BALLROOM

BOBC SPOTLIGHT

THE INNER FRONTIER

Ikigai, Well-Being, and the Art of Leadership

Leadership asks us to navigate uncertainty, make difficult choices, and carry responsibility for others. But what keeps the person behind the decisions grounded? Drawing on spirituality, yoga, mindfulness, and ikigai-the sense of meaning that makes life worth living-this address explores the relationship between inner well-being and responsible leadership. It considers how self-awareness and a clearer sense of purpose can inform the way we listen, respond to pressure, and exercise influence. In a world focused on speed and achievement, it invites a pause to ask, what are we leading for, and how do we remain human along the way?

SPEAKER

Nupur

Transformational & Mindfulness Coach, Japan

Tewari

15:40 - 15:50
GRAND BALLROOM

THE DIPLOMATIC LENS

Ghanshyam Bhandari, Ambassador of Nepal in Bangladesh

15:50 - 16:05
GRAND BALLROOM

THE STATECRAFT ADDRESS

WHEN THE STATE IS TESTED

Leadership, Institutions and Democracy in an Age of Fragility

What happens to democratic leadership when institutions are weak, security is under pressure and citizens begin to lose confidence in the state? Drawing on experience from Mali and across Africa, this address reflects on the difficult relationship between governance, security, legitimacy and development. It asks how states facing fragility can rebuild trust, strengthen institutions and preserve democratic possibility without allowing crisis to become a permanent condition.

SPEAKER

Moussa

Former Prime Minister, Republic of Mali

Mara

16:05 - 17:00
GRAND BALLROOM

LEADERSHIP FORUM

THE FUTURE OF ASIA

The Century's Defining Region

Asia now sits at the centre of global economic growth, technological innovation, and geopolitical competition. This session examines the opportunities and risks facing the world's most dynamic region and explores how Asian nations can contribute to a more stable and prosperous international order.

SPEAKERS

Andaleeve Rahman, Minister of Information and Broadcasting
Bangladesh

Farooq Sobhan, Former Foreign Secretary, Bangladesh

Mirco Gunther, Head of the Asia-Pacific Department, Friedrich Ebert
Stiftung, Germany

Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow
Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh

Shishir Priyadarshi, President, Chintan Research Foundation, India

Satoru Nagao, Fellow (Non-Resident), Hudson Institute, Japan (*Moderator*)

17:00 - 17:30
OASIS

THE SOCIAL INTERLUDE

19:30 - 23:00
GRAND BALLROOM

AN EVENING BY THE BAY (BY INVITATION ONLY)

09:30 - 11:00
CIAO

THE INNER FORUM (BY INVITATION ONLY)

BEYOND THE SAFETY NET

Ten Years of Social Protection Reform and What Comes Next

A decade of social protection reform has reshaped how Bangladesh thinks about welfare, inclusion, and the responsibilities of the state. With the National Social Security Strategy now reaching an important point of evaluation, this dialogue will examine what has worked, where institutional and coordination gaps remain, and what lessons should guide the next generation of social protection. Bringing together government, parliament, experts, and development partners, the session will explore how a more responsive, integrated, and trusted social protection system can strengthen social cohesion and governance in a rapidly changing economic and social landscape.

SPEAKERS

Ahmed Jamsheed Mohamed, Representative in Bangladesh
World Health Organization

Mariyam Nasir, Director General, Ministry of Education, Maldives

Max Tuñón, ILO Country Director, Bangladesh

Md. Nurul Haque, State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and
Overseas Employment of Bangladesh

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, Chairman, RAPID, Bangladesh

Nazneen Ahmed, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue
Bangladesh

Syed Haider, Head of Development Cooperation
Australian High Commission in Bangladesh

Zahir Uddin Swapon, Political Adviser to the Prime Minister, Bangladesh

Zuraida Kamaruddin, Former Minister of Plantation Industries and
Commodities, Malaysia

Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative
UNDP Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 11:00
SURMA

THE INNER FORUM (BY INVITATION ONLY)

ELECTIONS IN THE AGE OF DISRUPTION

Technology, social media, foreign influence operations, and declining public trust have transformed electoral politics worldwide. This session explores how electoral systems can remain credible, inclusive, and resilient amid new challenges.

SPEAKERS

Aishath Rafiya, Regional Director, Global Peace Institute, UK

Anastasia S. Wibawa, Project Director, European Partnership for Democracy, Belgium

Andre De Mello e Souza, Tenured Researcher and Policy Analyst
Institute for Applied Economic Research, Brazil

Come Bastin, Reporter, Medipart, France

Jathindra Ariyapala, Founding Director
Trinco Centre for Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka

Matiul Alam, Former Faculty and Honorary Research Scholar, University of British Columbia, Canada

Touseef Mehraj Raina, Co-Founder
Jammu Kashmir Policy Institute, India

Zahin Ahmed, UK Political Strategist and Adviser to the
UK Deputy Prime Minister, London

Suvojit Bagchi, Consulting Editor, ABP Online, India

Zain Tauqueer Khan, Former Editor of Diplomatic Affairs
Minute Mirror News, Pakistan (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 10:30
MEGHNA

THE AUTHOR'S TABLE (BY INVITATION ONLY)

CAN BANGLADESH BREAK THE CYCLE?

Bangladesh has travelled through repeated democratic openings, reversals, and unfinished transitions. This Author's Table explores the central questions raised in *A Fractured Path*: why past efforts failed, who the key actors are, what structural obstacles remain, and whether the current transition can produce a more durable democratic order.

The conversation connects Bangladesh's experience with lessons from other countries that have succeeded, or failed, in similar transitions.

SPEAKERS

Ali Riaz, Distinguished Professor, Illinois State University, USA

Michael Lidauer, Senior International Advisor
European Partnership for Democracy, Germany

Sreeradha Dutta, Professor, OP Jindal Global University, India

Mohammad Sajjadur Rahman, Adjunct Faculty
Independent University, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 10:30
CHITRA

THE MORNING SALON (BY INVITATION ONLY)

THE CLIMATE SECURITY CENTURY

Climate change is no longer solely an environmental challenge. It is increasingly shaping national security, economic stability, migration patterns, and geopolitical competition. As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions, the Bay of Bengal offers important lessons on adaptation, resilience, and international cooperation in an era of mounting environmental pressures.

SPEAKERS

Sabyasachi Dutta, Executive Director, Asian Confluence, India

Saimum Parvez, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of
Bangladesh for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change

Tara Marwah, Policy Advisor, The Asia Foundation
The Asia and the Pacific

Judith Mwaniki, Director, Development Programmes, Consortium for
Economic Research and Development Studies, Kenya (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 10:30
PADMA

THE STRATEGIC TABLE (BY INVITATION ONLY)

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN AN ERA OF CONSTANT CRISIS

Today's societies face overlapping crises—from natural disasters and cyber disruptions to economic shocks and political instability. This session examines how governments, communities, and institutions can strengthen resilience and maintain public trust during periods of uncertainty.

SPEAKERS

Emma Leslie, Founder, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and Southeast Asian Women Peace Mediators, Cambodia

Felix Gerdes, Resident Representative of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bangladesh

Indra Mani Panday, Secretary General, The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

James Angelus, Chairman, International Security Industry Council Japan

Mia Hyun, Gender Disability and Social Inclusion Lead, Aus4Growth, Boston Consulting Group/DFAT, Thailand

Parvez Karim Abbasi, Executive Director Centre For Governance Studies, Bangladesh

Sonam Yangchen, Health Systems Researcher Institute of Health Partners, Bhutan

Konstantinos Foutzopoulos, Executive Director Athens Riviera Forum, Greece (*Moderator*)

11:00 - 11:20
GRAND BALLROOM

BOBC SPOTLIGHT

FIVE SEAS, ONE GATHERING STORM

Conflict, Supply Routes and the Search for Peace

Could the separate fires surrounding the Black, Mediterranean, Caspian, Red and Arabian seas converge into a wider conflict-drawing the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal into its path? This strategic address examines the struggle over supply routes, Iran's emerging role, and the Gulf's security challenges amid concerns over declining American influence. It explores the potential for BRICS to help chart a path towards peace through political and diplomatic engagement. At its heart is a question of direct relevance to this forum: how can the Bay of Bengal remain a space of connection rather than become the next frontier of conflict?

SPEAKER

M. J. Akbar, Journalist & Former Minister of State for External Affairs, India

11:20 - 11:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE DIPLOMATIC LENS

Michael Miller, Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation in Bangladesh

11:30 - 12:10
GRAND BALLROOM

BOBC SPOTLIGHT

NEW WORLD. OLD HUMANS.

Humor, Humanity, and What Still Sets Us Apart

AI is changing how we work. Technology is changing how we communicate. Geopolitics is changing how we see the world. Everything around us is moving faster. And yet, for all this change, people remain remarkably human.

We still want to be understood. We still crave connection, recognition, and belonging. We still make irrational decisions, misread situations, tell stories, laugh at the wrong things, and find ways to turn even the most serious moments into something absurd.

In this plenary, a world-renowned comedian, executive coach, and educator explore what the craft of stand-up comedy can teach us about influence, creativity, adaptability, and communication in a rapidly changing world.

Drawing on decades of performing across cultures and continents, he offers a fresh perspective on leadership, human behaviour, and the skill that becomes more valuable as technology becomes more powerful.

Because perhaps the most important question about the future isn't what technology will become, but what we will remain.

SPEAKER

Papa CJ, Comedian, Educator, Thought Leader
Executive Coach, Live Learn Laugh LLP, India

12:10 - 13:10
GRAND BALLROOM

THE GRAND CONVERSATION

WHO GETS TO LEAD?

Women, Local Power, and the Future of Democratic Governance

Local elections are where democratic participation becomes most immediate and where questions of representation, access and leadership are often most visible. In Bangladesh, women participate widely in local political life, yet significant barriers remain to competing for general seats, chairperson positions and other leadership roles. This conversation will examine the institutional, financial, social and security constraints

that shape women's participation across the electoral cycle and ask what is needed to move from representation to meaningful political influence. It will also explore how electoral institutions, political actors, civil society, media and communities can help create a safer, more inclusive and trusted environment for women's leadership in local governance.

SPEAKERS

Abul Fazal Md. Sanaullah, Election Commissioner
Bangladesh Election Commission

Gitanjali Singh, Country Representative in Bangladesh, UN WOMEN

Md. Abdul Alim, Former Member
Electoral Reform Commission, Bangladesh

Rezwana Karim Snigdha, Professor of Anthropology at
Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh

Stephen Rodriques, Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh

Catherine M Cecil, Democracy Governance and Election Expert
USA (*Moderator*)

13:10 - 13:20
GRAND BALLROOM

THE DIPLOMATIC LENS

Sarah Cooke, British High Commissioner in Bangladesh

13:20 - 13:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE CATALYST

DO WE KNOW HOW TO GOVERN?

Governance is often discussed in terms of institutions, elections, and public policy-but the deeper question is whether societies truly know how to exercise power responsibly, build trust, and make institutions work for citizens. This Catalyst asks what good governance actually demands beyond laws and structures: accountability, competence, restraint, public reasoning, and the willingness to listen. In an age of political polarisation and declining trust, it challenges us to consider whether the real crisis is not only who governs but also how we govern-and whether we have learned to do it well.

SPEAKER

Mahfuz Anam, Editor, The Daily Star, Bangladesh

13:30 - 14:30
OASIS

THE MIDDAY TABLE

14:30 - 15:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE GRAND CONVERSATION

WHO DECIDES WHEN THE MODEL DECIDES?

Artificial Intelligence in the Machinery of the State

Governments across the Bay of Bengal are increasingly using artificial intelligence in public services, health, courts, taxation, social protection, and other functions of the state. Much of this promises greater efficiency and wider access. But a sharper question emerges when a model, rather than a person, begins to make judgments about individuals—who receives a benefit, who is audited, or whose application is approved. This dialogue explores the point at which efficiency and accountability begin to come apart and asks what must remain human when the machinery of the state becomes increasingly automated.

SPEAKERS

Rehan Asif Asad, Advisor to the Prime Minister, Bangladesh

Nicola Nixon, Executive Director, InsightWorks
The Asia Foundation, Asia and the Pacific

Susan Vize, Head of Office and Representative in Bangladesh, UNESCO

Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy, Sri Lanka

S. M. Ziauddin Hyder, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister
on Health Affairs, Bangladesh

Kazi Faisal Bin Seraj, Country Representative
The Asia Foundation, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

15:30 - 15:50
GRAND BALLROOM

BAY OF BENGAL LECTURE

BETWEEN POWER AND PRINCIPLE

Leadership, Reconciliation, and Strategic Choice in a Fragmented World

How should countries navigate a world in which great-power competition is intensifying, alliances are shifting, and domestic divisions increasingly shape foreign policy? Drawing on the experience of democratic transition, regional reconciliation and strategic balancing in the Balkans, this lecture reflects on the difficult choices leaders face when national

interest, historical memory, international pressure and the need for cooperation pull in different directions. It asks what responsible statecraft looks like in a fragmented world-and whether political courage can still create space for reconciliation, strategic autonomy and durable peace.

SPEAKER

Boris Tadić, Former President, Republic of Serbia

15:50 - 16:00
GRAND BALLROOM

THE CATALYST

JOURNALISM AFTER THE TURNING POINT

Hope, Reform and the Reality of Change

Bangladesh's political transition created expectations of change across institutions, including the media. Reform commissions were formed, recommendations were made, and hopes rose for greater freedom, accountability and professional security. Yet months after the election, many of those expectations remain unmet, while concerns over laws, safety, institutional protection and media independence persist. This Catalyst asks where Bangladesh journalism stands today, why promised reforms have been slow to materialise, and whether the moment for meaningful change is still within reach. Recent public debate has continued to focus on media independence, journalist safety, legal reform and the gap between reform proposals and implementation.

SPEAKER

Matiur Rahman, Editor, Prothom Alo, Bangladesh

16:00 - 17:00
GRAND BALLROOM

LEADERSHIP FORUM

THE DEMOCRACY CONVERSATION

Rebuilding Trust in an Age of Polarization

Many societies are experiencing declining trust in institutions, growing political polarization, and increasing pressure on democratic norms. This session explores practical pathways for strengthening democratic resilience, social cohesion, and public confidence.

SPEAKERS

Ashok Sajjanhar, President, Institute of Global Studies, India

Debapriya	Bhattacharya,	Distinguished	Fellow
Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh			

Moussa Mara, Former Prime Minister, Republic of Mali
Sergejs Potapkins, Former Member of Parliament, Latvia
Zuraida Kamaruddin, Former Minister of Plantation Industries and
 Commodities, Malaysia
Biswas Baral, Senior Journalist and Editor, Nepal (*Moderator*)

17:00 - 17:30
OASIS

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

18:00 - 19:30
CIAO

THE INNER FORUM (BY INVITATION ONLY)

WHY PROJECTS FAIL

Cost, Delivery and Accountability in Infrastructure

Infrastructure can transform economies, but too many projects are weakened by delays, escalating costs, poor coordination, weak project management and failures of accountability. Bringing together engineers, planners, project managers, policymakers and industry leaders, this dialogue will examine why major projects so often struggle between design and delivery-and what reforms in procurement, oversight, professional standards and institutional coordination can help infrastructure be completed faster, better and at lower cost.

SPEAKERS

Anurag Acharya, Director, Policy Entrepreneurs Incorporated, Nepal

Fahmida Khatun, Distinguished Fellow
Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh

Ghulam Mohammed Alomgir, Chairman, Max Group, Bangladesh

M. A. Baqui Khalily, Dean, School of Business, University of Asia Pacific

Morshedul Alam Chaklader, Director, NCC Bank, Bangladesh

Ohid Ahmed, Former Statutory Deputy Mayor of Tower Hamlets, London

Pushpan Murugiah, Founder & Executive Director, Southeast Asia
Institute for Accountability, Governance & Economics, Malaysia

Shah Mohammad Naheean, Head of Office
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Bangladesh

Shamim Z. Basunia, Emeritus Professor, Department of Civil Engineering
University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh

Tanvir Mahmud, Senior Governance Specialist
UNDP Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

18:00 - 19:30
SURMA

THE INNER FORUM (BY INVITATION ONLY)

REWIRING GLOBAL TRADE

Geopolitical tensions, economic nationalism, and supply-chain vulnerabilities are reshaping international commerce, and businesses are adapting to a rapidly changing global trading environment. This has created the need for adaptation of firms to a rapidly changing global environment.

SPEAKERS

Anwarul Alam Chowdhury, President
Bangladesh Chamber of Industry, Bangladesh

Dibya Mani Rajbhandari, Former Member of Parliament, Nepal

Imran Karim, Chairman, Confidence Power & Energy PLC, Bangladesh

Nicolas Weeks, Ambassador of Sweden in Bangladesh

Nikolaos K. Margaropoulos, President
World Federation of Consuls, Greece

Showkat Aziz Russell, President, Bangladesh Textiles Mills Association

Simon Kofi Tettey, Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Artificial Intelligence Training Expert, Micro1 Inc, France

Smruti S Pattanaik, Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis, India

Sriparna Pathak, Professor, O.P. Jindal Global University, India

Suthikorn Kingkaew, Advisor, KBU Research Institute
Thailand (*Moderator*)

18:30 - 19:30
MEGHNA

THE EVENING SALON (BY INVITATION ONLY)

THE INDO-PACIFIC AFTER REALIGNMENT

The Indo-Pacific has become the central theatre of global strategic competition. Yet regional actors are increasingly pursuing flexible partnerships rather than rigid alliances. This session examines emerging alignments, strategic autonomy, and the future of regional security architecture.

SPEAKERS

Dominique Jean Olivier Rakotozafy, Former Minister of Defence
Republic of Madagascar, Madagascar

Pradeep K Taneja, Deputy Associate Dean
The University of Melbourne, Australia

Zeba Fazli, Research Analyst, Henry L. Stimson Center, USA

Shafqat Munir, Senior Research Fellow
Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (*Moderator*)

18:30 - 19:30
CHITRA

THE EVENING SALON (BY INVITATION ONLY)

TRUTH UNDER ATTACK

Disinformation in the Digital Age

The battle for influence is increasingly taking place online. Deepfakes, coordinated misinformation campaigns, and algorithmic manipulation challenge democratic institutions and public trust. This session examines how societies can defend information integrity while protecting freedom of expression.

SPEAKERS

Kallol Bhattacharjee, Senior Assistant Editor, The Hindu, India

Pyrrou Chung, Director, East West Management Institute, Australia

Raju Mahajan, Founder & Principal Attorney, Mahajan Law LLC, USA

Irfan Yar, International Relations and Security Analyst, Canada (*Moderator*)

18:30 - 19:30
PADMA

THE STRATEGIC TABLE (BY INVITATION ONLY)

CRAFTING PRAGMATISM IN THE BAY OF BENGAL

Bangladesh's Foreign Policy in an Era of Global Realignment

This session introduces *Crafting Pragmatism: Bangladesh's Foreign Policy in an Era of Global Realignment*, a policy research endeavour examining how Bangladesh converts structural vulnerability into diplomatic agency amid intensifying great-power competition. Anchored in the Bay of Bengal's growing strategic salience, the discussion traces Bangladesh's evolution from doctrinal non-alignment toward pragmatic multi-alignment, diversifying partnerships across soft power, migration, pharmaceuticals, climate diplomacy, and supply chains rather than binding itself to a single power bloc. The session's significance lies in

bridging theoretical innovation, including meta geopolitics, graduated autonomy, and strategic pluralism, with policy-relevant empirical findings from selective in-depth studies, offering scholars and practitioners a shared framework for understanding how small and middle powers navigate global fragmentation. Particular attention goes to maritime security, connectivity, and energy dependence as emerging fault lines increasingly shape Bangladesh's foreign policy calculus within the wider Bay of Bengal and Indo-Pacific space.

SPEAKERS

Felix Gerdes, Resident Representative
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Bangladesh

Hafizur Rahman, Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Management, Independent University, Bangladesh

Marufa Akter, Associate Professor, Independent University, Bangladesh

Mashfee Binte Shams, Former Rector
Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh

Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, Chairman, RAPID, Bangladesh

Shadhan Kumar Das, Program Advisor, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung ,
Bangladesh

Syeda Rozana Rashid, Professor, Department of International Relations
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Niloy Ranjan Biswas, Professor, Department of International Relations,
University of Dhaka (*Moderator*)

19:30 - 23:00
POOL CAFE

BY THE WATER (BY INVITATION ONLY)

09:30 - 11:00
CIAO

THE INNER FORUM (BY INVITATION ONLY)

LEADERSHIP IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

The demands placed on leaders have never been greater. Governments must navigate geopolitical competition, technological disruption, climate risks, and societal expectations simultaneously. This session explores what effective leadership looks like in an increasingly complex world.

SPEAKERS

Aamna Khan, Non-Resident Fellow, London Dialogue, Qatar

Constantino Xavier, Senior Fellow
Centre for Social and Economic Progress, India

Hadza Min Fadhli Robby, Director, Institute for Global and Strategic Studies, Islamic University of Indonesia

Julia Roknifard, Senior Lecturer, Taylor's University, Malaysia

Krzysztof Marcin Zalewski, President, The Boym Institute, Poland

Hallelujah Lulie Wondimu, PhD Researcher
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Mahdi Amin, Advisor to the Prime Minister, Bangladesh

Mehmet Ozkan, Professor of International Relations, Turkish National Defence University, Turkey

Petr Topyckanov, Associate Senior Researcher
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russia

Kamal Dev Bhattarai, Editor-in-Chief
The Annapurna Express, Nepal (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 11:00
SURMA

THE INNER FORUM (BY INVITATION ONLY)

CAN ALGORITHMS BUILD TRUST?

Rethinking State Capacity in the Age of AI

For decades, state capacity has been understood in terms of resources, institutions, and administrative effectiveness. New research suggests that outcomes also depend on the quality of relationships between citizens and government. At the same time, governments are increasingly

turning to AI to support service delivery, regulation, and decision-making. This session explores the intersection of these trends. What kinds of trust, recognition, and accountability are required for AI-enabled governance to succeed? Under what conditions does technology strengthen citizen-state relationships, and when might it erode them?

SPEAKER

Fayyaz Yaseen Bhidal, Executive Director, Accountability Lab, Pakistan

JP Singh, Managing Director, Starker Global Solutions, India

Marko Skoric, Associate Professor, City University of Hong Kong

Narayan Adhikari, South and East Asia Director
Accountability Lab, Nepal

Nicola Nixon, Executive Director, InsightWorks
The Asia Foundation, Asia and the Pacific

Sebastian Groh, CEO and Co-Founder, SOLshare, Bangladesh

Sheikh Mohammad Danial, Director, Sonali Life Insurance, Bangladesh

Shimelse Mekonnen, Founder, Economist, and AI/ML Researcher, USA

Subimal Bhattacharjee, Policy Adviser, India

Mamun Rashid, President, ShopUp, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 10:30
MEGHNA

THE MORNING SALON (BY INVITATION ONLY)

MIDDLE POWERS RISING

The Search for Strategic Autonomy

Countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America increasingly seek to avoid being drawn into major power rivalries. This session explores how middle powers are expanding diplomatic space, diversifying partnerships, and asserting greater influence in global affairs.

SPEAKER

Imtiaz Gul, CEO, Center for Research and Security Studies, Pakistan

Jalil Rahimi Jahanabadi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of
Iran in Bangladesh

Yousef S Y Ramadan, Ambassador of the State of Palestine
in Bangladesh

Amena Mohsin, Former Professor, Department of International Relations
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 10:30
CHITRA

THE MORNING SALON (BY INVITATION ONLY)

WATER, RIVERS, AND REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

Freshwater resources are becoming increasingly contested across many parts of the world. Shared river systems present both opportunities for cooperation and sources of political tension. This session explores emerging approaches to water diplomacy, transboundary governance, and sustainable management of shared resources, with relevance to South Asia and the Bay of Bengal region.

SPEAKERS

Anthony Jude Uche Igwe, Executive Director
Ngalasi Centre for Cohesion and Development, Nigeria

Manjur Ahmed Chowdhury, Former Chairman
National River Conservation Commission, Bangladesh

Muhammad Azeem Ali Shah, Director
Blue Green Nexus Pvt Ltd, Pakistan

Grace Katherine Corcoran, Research Fellow
Australia India Institute, Australia (*Moderator*)

09:30 - 10:30
PADMA

THE STRATEGIC TABLE (BY INVITATION ONLY)

ENERGY SECURITY IN AN AGE OF TRANSITION

From Ambition to Implementation

The energy transition is no longer only a question of ambition; it is increasingly a question of implementation. Governments face the challenge of securing reliable and affordable energy while expanding renewables, mobilising private investment and modernising energy infrastructure. Drawing on the experience of Bangladesh and the wider region, this dialogue will explore the policy, regulatory, financing and institutional barriers that can slow the transition from targets to delivery and what is needed to turn renewable-energy potential into energy security.

SPEAKERS

Ghulam Mohammed Alomgir, Chairman, Max Group, Bangladesh

J Alexander-Brien, Founder, Maritime Frontiers, Canada

Shanthie Mariet Dsouza, Founder & Executive Director, Mantraya
Institute for Strategic Studies, India

M. Tamim, Vice Chancellor, Independent University, Bangladesh

Sanjay Kumar Bhardwaj, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Shah Zulfiqar Haider, EMI Consultant, Bangladesh

Suresh Marcandan, Managing Director
Governance Guru Private Ltd., Australia

Nikki Singer, Executive Director
Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Cambodia (*Moderator*)

11:00 - 11:15
GRAND BALLROOM

THE SURVIVAL ADDRESS

WHEN A NATION FACES THE RISING SEA

Climate, Security and the Politics of Survival

For small islands and coastal nations, climate change is no longer an abstract environmental debate - it is a question of territory, livelihoods, sovereignty and national survival. This address explores what climate vulnerability means for political leadership, international justice and human security, and why countries on the front line of rising seas must have a stronger voice in shaping the global response. From the Maldives to the Bay of Bengal, it asks a fundamental question: what does sovereignty mean when the geography of a nation itself is at risk?

SPEAKER

Mohammad Nasheed, Former President, Republic of Maldives

11:15 - 12:05
GRAND BALLROOM

THE GRAND CONVERSATION

CONSTRUCTIVE CAPITAL VS. STRATEGIC CAPITAL

Investment is no longer simply an economic question. Infrastructure finance, sovereign wealth funds, and strategic investments increasingly influence political and security outcomes. This session explores how countries can maximize economic benefits while safeguarding national interests.

SPEAKERS

Abdullah Rasheed Ahmed, Former Minister of State for Education
Republic of Maldives

Erin Watson, Chief Executive Officer, Baker & York, Australia

Mohammed Parvez Imdad, Economist, Policy Analyst, and Regional
Cooperation Specialist, Washington D.C., USA

K. M. Mozibul Hoque, Chairman, Shah Group, Bangladesh

Yoshikazo Kato, Research Fellow
Rakuten Securities Economic Research Institute, Japan
Gregory Simons, Professor of Journalism
Daffodil University, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

12:05 - 12:25
GRAND BALLROOM

BOBC SPOTLIGHT

THE OCEAN HAS NO BORDERS

Why Security, Prosperity and Human Dignity Depend on What Connects Us

The ocean is often viewed through the lenses of borders, trade routes, resources and strategic competition. Yet beneath these divisions lies a more fundamental reality: the ocean is a shared system connecting our climate, food, livelihoods, security and human dignity. Drawing on extraordinary encounters with some of the world's most challenging waters, this address invites us to see the ocean not as a frontier that separates nations, but as a living connection that binds their futures together. At a time of climate disruption, geopolitical fragmentation and growing human insecurity, it asks what changes when we begin to understand the ocean not simply as territory to navigate or compete over, but as a shared foundation of resilience, prosperity and human survival.

SPEAKER

Andre Wiersig, Founder and Managing Director
theBlueHeart gGmbH, Germany

12:25 - 12:35
GRAND BALLROOM

THE DIPLOMATIC LENS

Joris van Bommel, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh

12:35 - 13:30
GRAND BALLROOM

THE LEADERSHIP FORUM

THE NEW STRATEGIC MIDDLE

Agency, Influence and Leadership in a Multipolar World

As global power becomes more dispersed, a new group of strategically consequential countries is gaining greater agency in shaping international affairs. Neither defined by traditional blocs nor confined to great-power rivalries, this New Strategic Middle is navigating competing partnerships while advancing its own interests and choices in an increasingly multipolar world.

SPEAKER

Ajit Singh, High Commissioner of Canada in Bangladesh

Jovan Ratkovic, Senior Fellow, Agora Strategy Institute, Belgium

Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet, Ambassador of France in Bangladesh

Mohammad Nasheed, Former President, the Republic of Maldives

Rüdiger Lotz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bangladesh

Vlada Galan, Partner, Oracle Advisory Group, USA (*Moderator*)

13:30 - 14:30

OASIS

THE MIDDAY TABLE

14:30 - 15:30

GRAND BALLROOM

THE GRAND CONVERSATION

JUSTICE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Many societies continue to grapple with difficult questions related to past conflicts, political transitions, and demands for accountability. This session explores comparative experiences in transitional justice, reconciliation, and institution-building.

SPEAKERS

Karori Singh, Professor, University of Rajasthan, India

Kayser Kamal, Deputy Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament

Madalitso Zililo Phiri, Researcher, Wits University, South Africa

Nurul Kabir, Editor, New Age, Bangladesh

Victoria Vladimirovna Panova, Head, BRICS Expert Council, Russia

Pramod Jaiswal, Research Director

Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement (*Moderator*)

15:30 - 16:30

GRAND BALLROOM

LEADERSHIP FORUM

WHY THE BAY MATTERS TO THE WORLD

The Bay of Bengal is emerging as one of the most strategically significant regions of the twenty-first century. Connecting South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the broader Indo-Pacific, the region is central to maritime trade, energy security, connectivity, climate resilience, and geopolitical competition.

SPEAKERS

Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhury, Chairman
Sanobar Institute Islamabad, Pakistan

Christian Brix Møller, Ambassador of Denmark in Bangladesh

Humaiun Kobir, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh

John K Glenn, Professorial Lecturer
George Washington University, United States

Shiuneen Rasheed, High Commissioner of the Maldives in Bangladesh

Parvez Karim Abbasi, Executive Director
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

16:30 - 16:40
GRAND BALLROOM

THE HUMAN HORIZON

THE MEASURE OF PROGRESS

Dignity, Health and the Human Future

Nations often measure progress through growth, infrastructure, technology and institutional achievement. But the deeper measure lies in how people live: whether they can access healthcare, whether opportunity reaches beyond privilege, whether women and young people can fulfil their potential, and whether institutions treat citizens with dignity. This address considers what it means to place human wellbeing at the center of national progress, and why compassion, inclusion and professional excellence remain essential in a rapidly changing world.

SPEAKER

Zubaida Rahman, Vice President, Ziaur Rahman Foundation, Bangladesh

16:40 - 17:00
GRAND BALLROOM

THE FINAL CONVERSATION

Zillur Rahman, President, CGS
Chair, Bay of Bengal Conservation, Bangladesh

17:00 - 17:30
OASIS

THE SOCIAL INTERLUDE

19:30 - 23:00
GRAND BALLROOM

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN (BY INVITATION ONLY)

11:00 - 11:30
TITAS

BEYOND BIPOLARITY

Navigating an Uncomfortable Multipolar World

The era of unchallenged dominance by any single power is fading. While the United States and China remain central actors, emerging powers and regional coalitions increasingly shape global outcomes. This session explores how states are adapting to a more fluid distribution of power and what multipolarity means for stability, competition, and cooperation.

SPEAKERS

Hadza Min Fadhli Robby, Director
Institute for Global and Strategic Studies, Islamic University of Indonesia
Keshav Padmanabhan, Principal Correspondent, ThePrint, India
Raheed Ezaj, Diplomatic Correspondent
Prothom Alo, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

12:00 - 12:30
TITAS

MARITIME RIVALRIES AND THE FUTURE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Control of maritime routes, ports, and undersea infrastructure has become central to geopolitical competition. As naval presence expands across the Indian Ocean, questions surrounding freedom of navigation, maritime security, and regional cooperation take on renewed importance.

SPEAKERS

J Alexander-Brien, Founder, Maritime Frontiers, Canada
Jayanta Ghosal, Contributing Editor, NDTV, India
Mustafizur Rahman, Joint News Editor, New Age, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

13:00 - 13:30
TITAS

CONFLICT WITHOUT BORDERS: THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN WARFARE

Wars are no longer confined to traditional battlefields. Cyber-attacks, information operations, economic coercion, and proxy conflicts have transformed how power is exercised. This discussion examines how security institutions must adapt to new forms of conflict.

SPEAKERS

James Angelus, Chairman, International Security Industry
Council Japan, Japan
Julia Rognifard, Senior Lecturer, Taylor's University, Malaysia
Roman Uddin, Senior Research Associate
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

15:00 - 15:30
TITAS

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP BEYOND REPRESENTATION

Women's leadership is increasingly influencing diplomacy, governance, security, business, and civil society. This conversation highlights the experiences of prominent female leaders and examines how inclusive leadership can contribute to more resilient and effective institutions.

SPEAKERS

Anastasia S. Wibawa, Project Director
European Partnership for Democracy, Belgium

Emma Leslie, Founder, Centre for Peace and
Conflict Studies and Southeast Asian

Zyma Islam, Senior Reporter, The Daily Star, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

16:00 - 16:30
TITAS

GOVERNING TECHNOLOGY BEFORE TECHNOLOGY GOVERNS US

Technological innovation is advancing faster than regulatory frameworks. Policymakers worldwide face difficult questions regarding privacy, ethics, artificial intelligence, digital rights, and state oversight. This session explores pathways toward responsible governance of emerging technologies.

SPEAKERS

Kamakshi Wason, Global COO and Executive Director of
Academic Programmes, Tillotoma Foundation, India

Konstantinos Foutzopoulos, Executive Director
Athens Riviera Forum, Greece

Kazi Rhid, Strategy Associate
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

17:00 - 17:30
TITAS

WHAT KIND OF WORLD ARE WE BUILDING?

The Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 concludes by reflecting on the major themes that have emerged throughout the conference. Speakers will assess the challenges and opportunities facing the international community and consider how leadership, innovation, and cooperation can help shape a more stable, inclusive, and resilient future.

SPEAKERS

Aamna Khan, Non-Resident Fellow, London Dialogue, Qatar

Krzysztof Marcin Zalewski, President, The Boym Institute, Poland

Depanjali Roy, Senior Research Associate, Centre for Governance Studies,
Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

11:00 - 11:30
TITAS

THE DIPLOMAT'S WORLD

Former foreign ministers, diplomats, and negotiators reflect on lessons from diplomacy in an era of geopolitical uncertainty.

SPEAKERS

Suresh Marcandan, Managing Director
Governance Guru Private Ltd., Australia

Ashok Sajjanhar, President, Institute of Global Studies, India

Shamsuddoza Sajen, Content Editor
The Daily Star, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

12:00 - 12:30
TITAS

JOURNALISM ON THE FRONTLINES

Leading journalists discuss reporting from conflict zones, covering global crises, and defending independent journalism amid growing pressures.

SPEAKERS

Come Bastin, Reporter, Mediapart, France

Suvojit Bagchi, Consulting Editor, ABP Online, India

Md Muktadir Rashid, Bangladesh Correspondent
The Irrawaddy, Thailand (*Moderator*)

13:00 - 13:30
TITAS

THE BAY OF BENGAL ECONOMY

Opportunity or Missed Potential?

Despite its strategic location and demographic dynamism, the Bay of Bengal remains under-integrated economically. This session explores pathways for deeper regional cooperation, trade expansion, and sustainable growth.

SPEAKERS

Asif. A. Chowdhury, Vice President, International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations, Bangladesh

Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General
The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

Tasfia Rahman, Research Assistant
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

15:00 - 15:30
TITAS

FEEDING EIGHT BILLION

Food Security in an Uncertain World

Food security is increasingly affected by climate change, conflict, supply chain disruptions, and population growth. This session examines how governments, businesses, and international institutions can strengthen agricultural resilience and safeguard food systems against future shocks.

SPEAKERS

Judith Mwaniki, Director, Development Programmes, Consortium for Economic Research and Development Studies, Kenya

K. M. Mozibul Hoque, Chairman, Shah Group, Bangladesh

Tasnim Mohsin, Special Correspondent, New Age, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

16:00 - 16:30
TITAS

CITIES UNDER PRESSURE

Urban centers are at the forefront of demographic, economic, and environmental transformation. From Dhaka to Lagos and Jakarta to São Paulo, cities face growing challenges related to infrastructure, housing, transportation, and climate resilience. This discussion explores how cities can remain engines of opportunity amid mounting pressures.

SPEAKERS

Kazi Shah Muzakker Ahmadul Hoque, Director
Shah Group and TAS Group

Sebastian Groh, Managing Director, SOLshare, Bangladesh

Salahuddin Ahmed Reza, Reporter, Jamuna TV, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

17:00 - 17:30
TITAS

MIGRATION, MOBILITY AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Migration is increasingly driven by conflict, economic opportunity, climate change, and demographic shifts. This session examines how governments can balance national interests with humanitarian responsibilities while promoting safe, orderly, and dignified mobility.

SPEAKERS

Max Tuñón, Country Director
International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangladesh

Sreeradha Dutta, Professor, OP Jindal Global University, India

Jahanara Jaba, Research Assistant
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

11:00 - 11:30
TITAS

THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated both the strengths and weaknesses of international health governance. Future crises may emerge from pandemics, antimicrobial resistance, or climate-related health risks. This session explores how global health systems can become more resilient and equitable.

SPEAKERS

Andre De Mello e Souza, Tenured Researcher and Policy Analyst
Institute for Applied Economic Research, Brazil

Sonam Yangchen, Health Systems Researcher
Institute of Health Partners, Bhutan

Morshed Hasib, Senior Reporter, Channel24, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

12:00 - 12:30
TITAS

SECURITY BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD

Traditional security concepts focus primarily on military threats. Today, vulnerabilities related to food, water, energy, health, and climate increasingly shape national stability. This session explores how governments can integrate human security into broader strategic planning.

SPEAKERS

Dominique Jean Olivier Rakotozafy, Former Minister of Defence
Republic of Madagascar, Madagascar

Pushpan Murugiah, Founder & Executive Director
Southeast Asia Institute for Accountability
Governance & Economics, Malaysia

Debi Karmakar, Research Associate
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

13:00 - 13:30
TITAS

MEDIA, MISINFORMATION AND DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE

Journalism remains essential to accountability and informed public debate. Yet media institutions face unprecedented challenges from economic pressures, technological disruption, and information manipulation. This session examines the future of independent journalism and trusted information ecosystems.

SPEAKERS

Arjun Singh Kadian, Project Lead, Rishihood University India

Shihab Uddin Khan, Deputy Attorney General, Bangladesh

Tanzila Hossain Tonny, Research Assistant
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)

15:00 - 15:30
TITAS

GOVERNING DIVERSE SOCIETIES

Managing diversity remains one of the defining challenges of modern governance. This session explores how societies can strengthen inclusion, social cohesion, and national unity while respecting political, cultural, ethnic, and religious differences.

SPEAKERS

Mia Hyun, Gender Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Lead,
Aus4Growth , Boston Consulting Group/DFAT, Thailand

Marzana Mahnaz, Research Associate
Centre for Governance Studies, Bangladesh (*Moderator*)



**Power in Transition
The Technology
Frontier**

**The New Economic
Geography**

**Climate,
Resilience and
Human Security**

**Trust, Democracy
and the Future of
Governance**

SPEAKERS



A N M MUNIRUZZAMAN

President, Bangladesh Institute of
Peace and Security Studies
Bangladesh



AISHATH RAFIYYA

Regional Director, Global Peace
Institute, United Kingdom

.....



AAMNA KHAN

Non-Resident Fellow
London Dialogue, Qatar



AIZAZ AHMAD CHAUDHRY

Chairman, Sanobar Institute,
Pakistan

.....



ABDULLA RASHEED AHMED

Former Minister of State for
Education, the Republic of
Maldives



AJIT SINGH

High Commissioner of Canada in
Bangladesh

.....



ABUL FAZAL MD. SANAULLAH

Election Commissioner of
Bangladesh



ALEXANDER FALCK-BILDEN

Deputy Head of Mission
Royal Norwegian Embassy in
Bangladesh

.....



AHMED JAMSHEED MOHAMED

Representative in Bangladesh,
World Health Organization



ALI RIAZ

Distinguished Professor
Illinois State University, USA

.....

**AMENA MOHSIN**

Former Professor, Department of
International Relations, University
of Dhaka, Bangladesh

**ANOWARUL HAQ**

Assistant Resident Representative
United Nations Development
Programme, Bangladesh

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**ANASTASIA S WIBAWA**

Project Director, European
Partnership for Democracy
Belgium

**ANTHONY JUDE UCHE IGWE**

Executive Director
Ngalasi Centre for Cohesion and
Development, Nigeria

.....

**ANDALEEVE RAHMAN**

Minister of Information and
Broadcasting of Bangladesh and
Member of Parliament

**ANURAG ACHARYA**

Director
Policy Entrepreneurs Incorporated
Nepal

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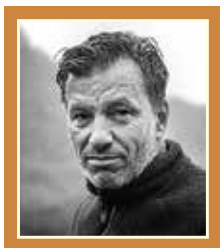
**ANDRÉ DE MELLO E SOUZA**

Tenured Researcher and Policy
Analyst, Institute for Applied
Economic Research, Brazil

**ANWAR-UL ALAM
CHOWDHURY**

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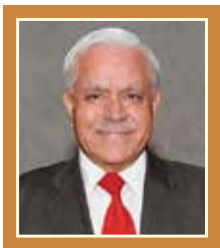
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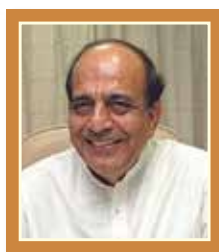
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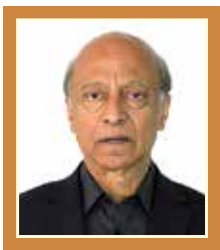
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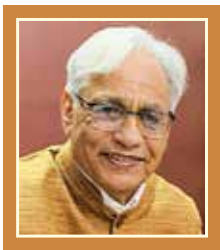


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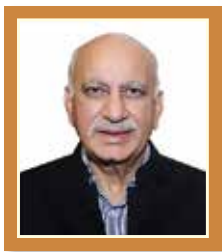


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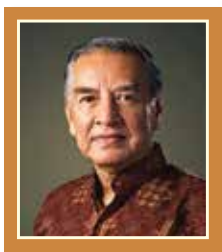


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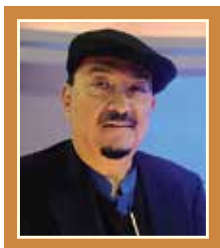


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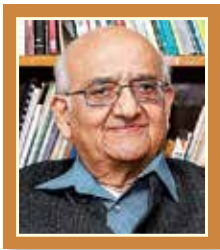
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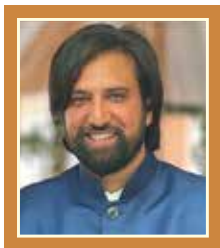
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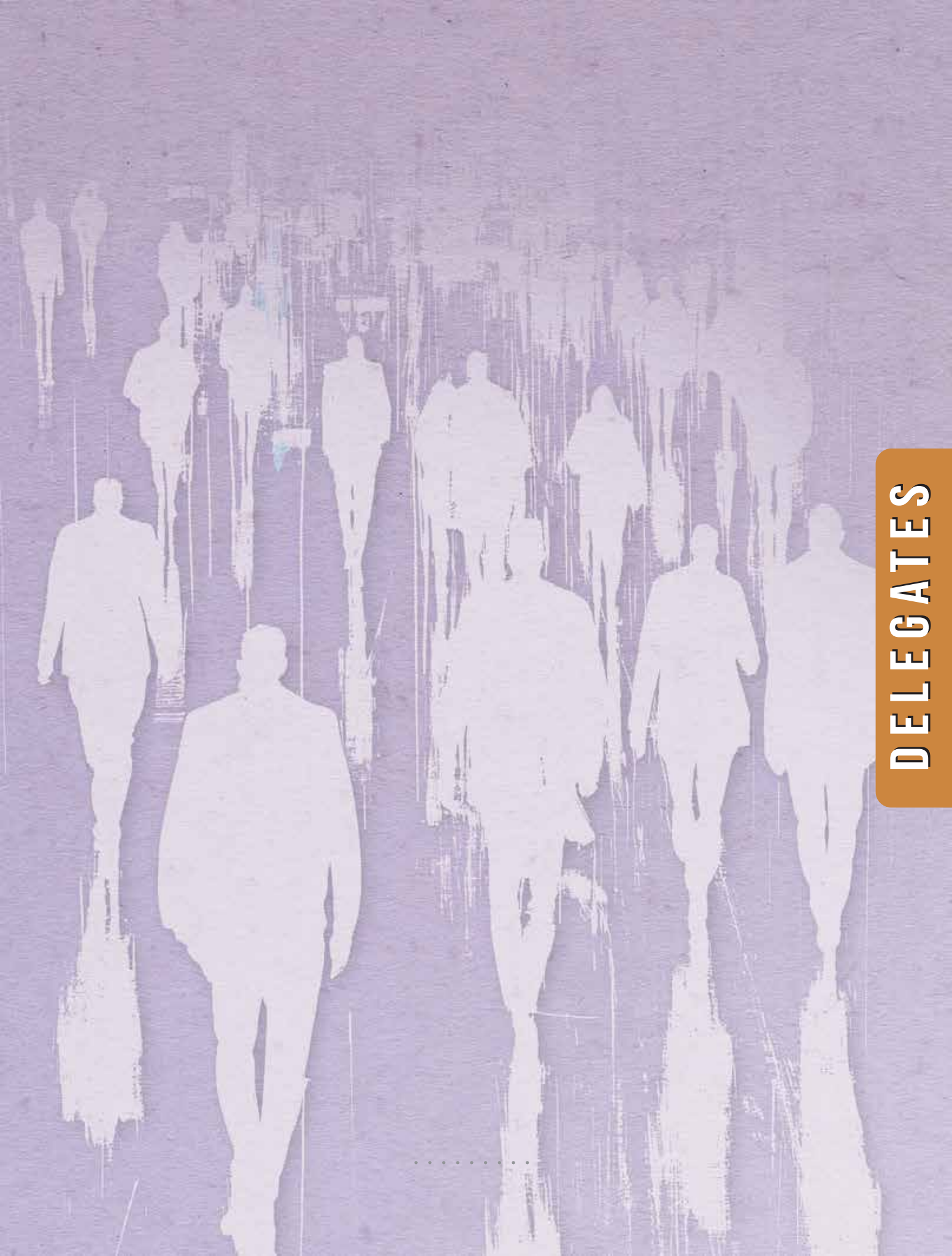
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of the Philippines in Chattogram



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Bangladesh Textile Mills Association
(BTMA)

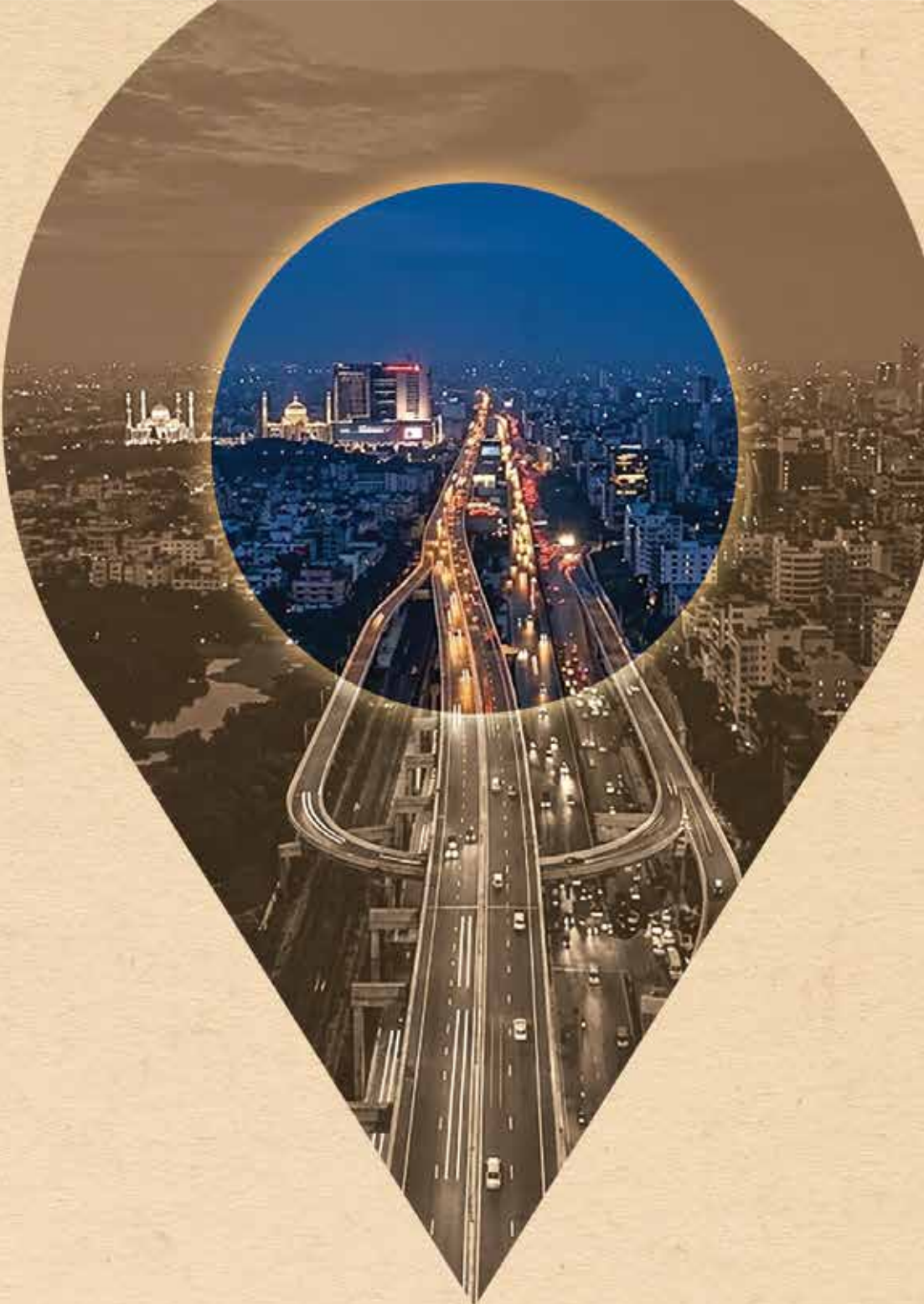
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SHIVARAMAN S

Second Secretary
High Commission of India, Dhaka

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TEAM BOBC



ABDUS SAMI ANON



BAHAUDDIN AHMED

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ABU AL SAYEED



DEBI KARMAKAR

.....



AFSANA MIMI



DEPANJALI ROY

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ANTHONY GOMES



FAWZIA AFRIN JOYA

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ARPITA GHOSH



IFTEAKHAR HOSSAIN

.....



JAHANARA JABA



MARZANA MAHNAZ

.....



JOYANTA BISWAS



NAHID HASAN

.....



JULIAN ANGKON ROZARIO



NUZHAT TABASSUM

.....



KAZI RHID



PARVEZ KARIM ABBASI

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KHALEDUR RAHMAN



PRODIP KUMAR SHIL

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RAJESH MONDAL



TANZILA HOSAIN TONNY

.....



ROMAN UDDIN



TASFIA RAHMAN

.....



SANJOY DEBNATH



TOHFATUR RABBI PIYAL

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SHARAF ANJUM PROVA



ZILLUR RAHMAN

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SUBIR DAS

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CODE OF CONDUCT

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARTICIPATION AT THE BAY OF BENGAL CONVERSATION

The Bay of Bengal Conversation is an impartial and diverse platform with participants from all walks of life. We priorities making the conference an inclusive and comfortable environment for all attendees, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, race, religion, or impairment. We ask that everyone involved with the Bay of Bengal Conversation, including participants, organisers, and hotel staff, obey our Participation Code of Conduct and understand the consequences of any infractions.

Throughout the conference, our team will also release house rules and updates, which we ask all stakeholders to observe.

The Code of Conduct is neither legal nor prescriptive. It enhances and does not supersede the implementation of any relevant policies, regulations, rules, and laws, including legislation governing the venue of the conference and any applicable host country agreements. Participants agree to abide by the Code of Conduct as well as all relevant event rules and procedures, including health standards.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

During the conference, we expect everyone to follow our anticipated behaviour rules and to respect our anti-harassment policy. This covers conference-related social gatherings as well as online social media participation. If conference organisers request that you stop engaging in banned behaviour, you must do so promptly. If unacceptable behaviour continues, the conference organisers may take any necessary action, including immediate ejection from the conference and/or reporting to appropriate authorities.

RESOURCES

Reporting Inappropriate Conduct

Please notify a conference organizer if you are subjected to harassment or other unacceptable behaviour. Event organisers will be accessible and present throughout the conference. If you witness or have a grievance and prefer to remain anonymous, please fill out and submit a handwritten/typed complaint and submit it to a member of the organising team.

Law Enforcement

If an emergency arises, please first proceed to notify a conference organiser of the issue. If then the need arises, participants should contact the Dhaka Police by dialling 999 (Emergency Number).

Medical Station

We have a doctor on call and at the station throughout the conference. In the event you need medical attention, please seek out our medical station.

Attendance and Dress Code

We restrict access to the Bay of Bengal Conversation to participants with valid confirmation cards. All participants must attend the conference in formal attire (business formal /national/uniform).

Conference Participation

Please respect fellow participants. You should frame conversations openly and inclusively. Profanity or slurs are prohibited. If you choose to attend a panel discussion, we request you stay seated for the duration.

Drugs and Alcohol

We abide by and enforce all local, state, and central laws and regulations surrounding the possession and/or use of illegal substances. In addition, please limit tobacco use to permitted areas and consume alcohol in moderation.

Safety

We hope our participants accept a shared responsibility for conference safety and notify conference organisers of any danger or misconduct they may witness. The possession of weapons or violence in any form is not permitted.

To ensure order throughout the conference, we do not permit organised demonstrations or disruptions of any kind.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

We do not tolerate any form of harassment at the Bay of Bengal Conversation. Our zero-tolerance policy prohibits all forms of harassment, including, but not limited to:

- Making derogatory or demeaning comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Name-calling or using slurs with a gender/sexual connotation;
- Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing, or body parts;
- Rating a person's sexuality;
- Repeatedly asking a person for dates or asking for sex;
- Staring in a sexually suggestive manner;
- Unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against a person;
- Making inappropriate sexual gestures, such as pelvic thrusts;
- Sharing sexual or lewd anecdotes or jokes;
- Sending sexually suggestive communications in any format;
- Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate images or videos in any format;
- Attempted or actual sexual assault, including rape.

A participant should never knowingly make a false or misleading claim about prohibited conduct.

PROHIBITION OF RETALIATION

Threats, intimidation, or any other form of retaliation against a participant who has made a complaint or provided information in support of a complaint are prohibited. The organisers will take any reasonable and appropriate action needed to prevent and respond to retaliation in accordance with its applicable policy, regulations, and rules.

MEDIA ADVISORY

ELIGIBILITY

All accredited members of the media, as well as senior journalists, columnists, and commentators who are not accredited, are eligible for participation as long as they are registered.

VENUE AND AGENDA

The "Bay of Bengal Conversation" Dialogue will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from Octoberber 3-5, 2026, at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon, 107 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh. The full agenda is available at <https://bayofbengalconversation.cgs-bd.com/>

Please bear in mind that session timings are subject to change.

CONFERENCE ACCESS

Media will have access to all public sessions.

Public sessions can also be viewed live on CGS's web platform or our YouTube, X, LinkedIn and Facebook handle.

You can also visit our website for various updates on the conference.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Find us on X (@CGSbangladesh) and Instagram (@centreforgovernancestudiesbd), LinkedIn (@centerforgovernancestudies), YouTube (@CGSBD), Facebook (@cgs.org), and follow all conference updates with the hashtag <#BoBC2026>.

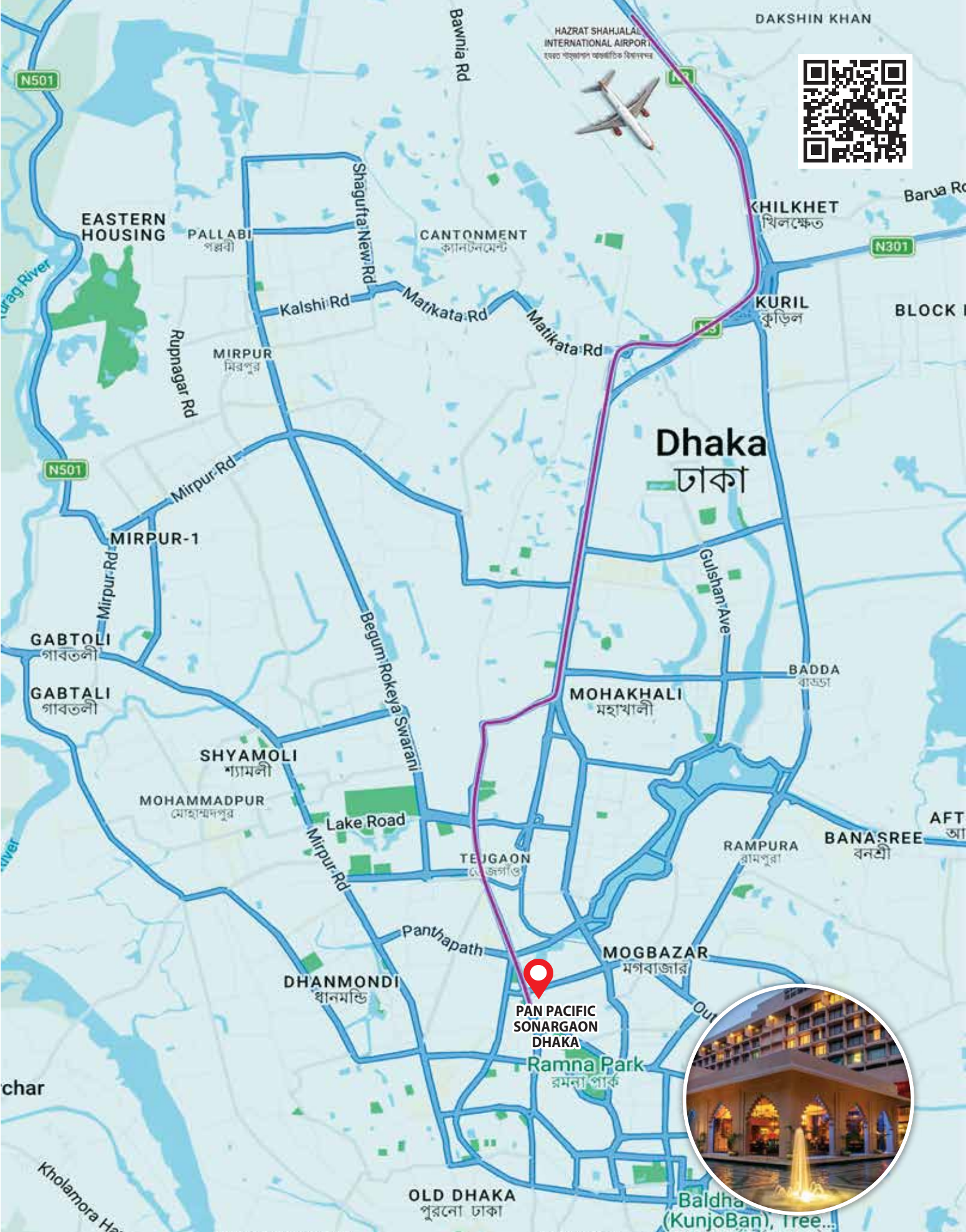
We encourage you to use <#BoBC2026> so that we can identify your message on our social media platforms.

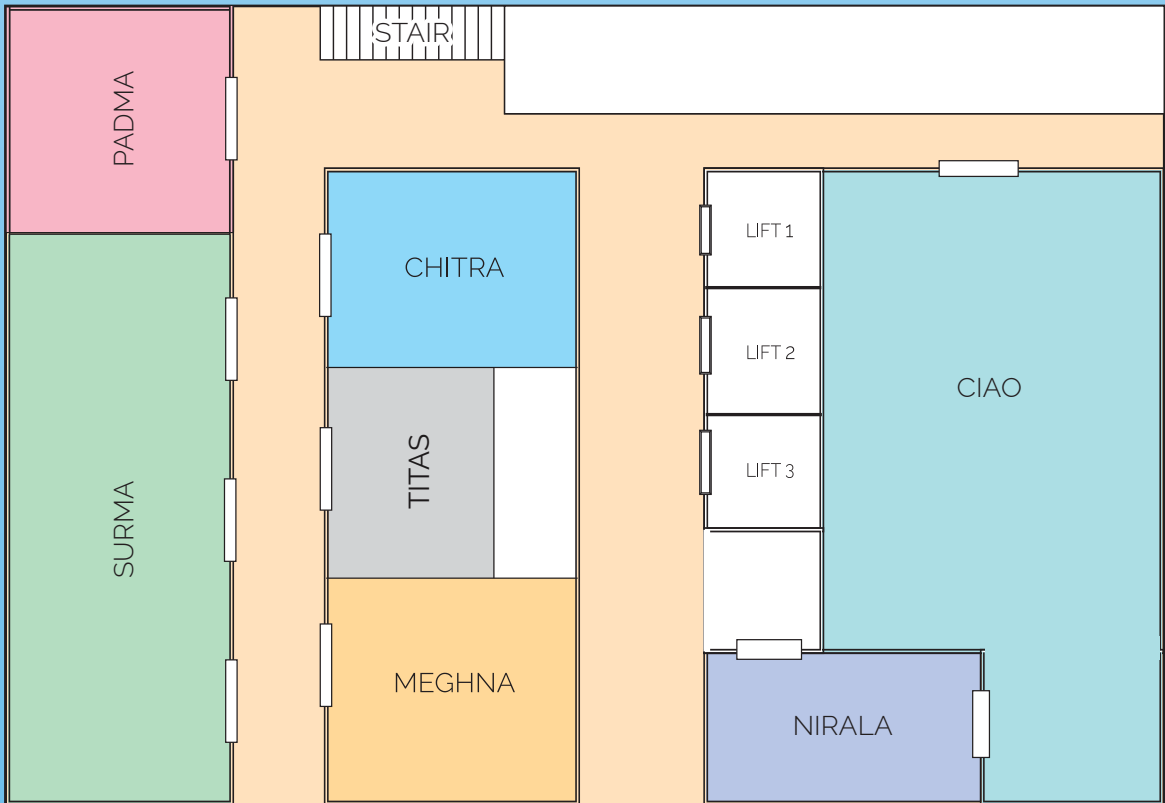
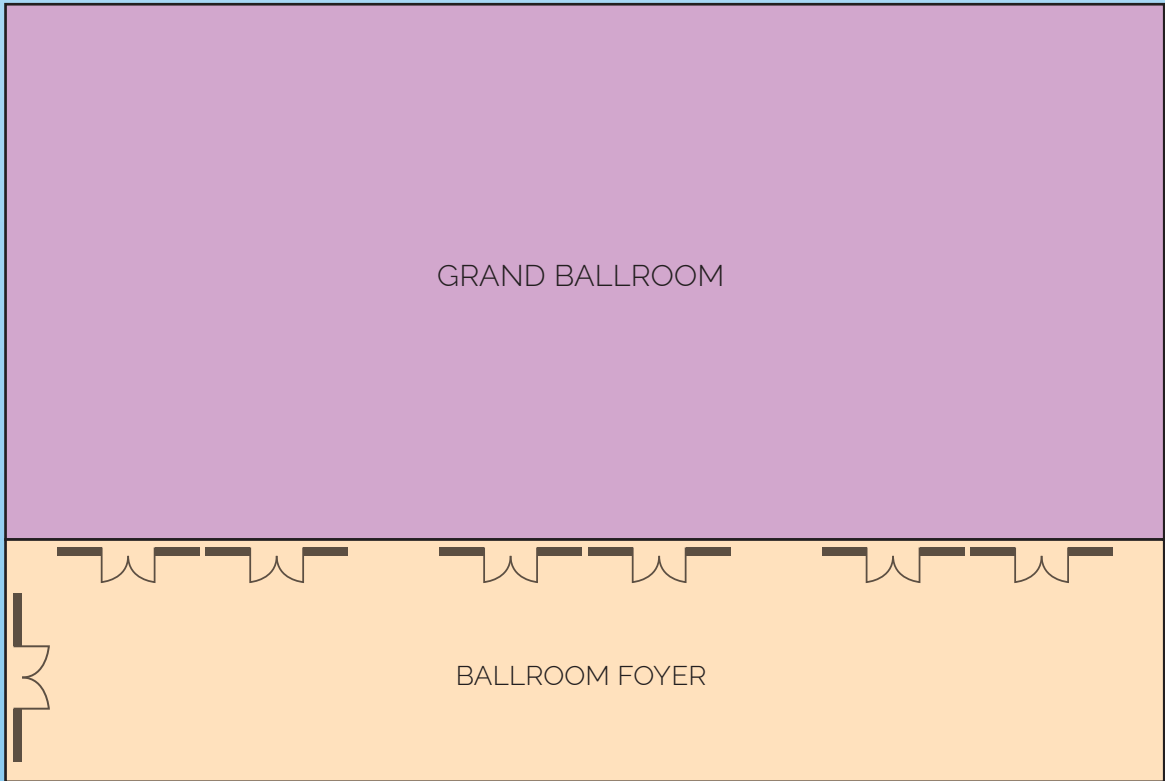
MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT

The Bay of Bengal Conversation Charter of Participation applies to all members of the media. If any media members are found to be in violation of conference rules, their access may be revoked. We expect that the media will be transparent and accurate in its coverage of conference events. "The Bay of Bengal Conversation" and its hosts, "The Centre for Governance Studies," must be fully acknowledged in all media coverage during and after the conference, including off-stage interactions with speakers and participants. Only active sessions and discussions, as well as mutually agreed-upon interviews, are expected to be covered by the media.

CONTACT

For any queries or assistance, please write to Sanjoy Debnath (sanjoy@cgs-bd.com)







3-5 OCTOBER 2026 • DHAKA

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



Bay of Bengal
Conversation
FRAGMENTS • FRONTIERS • FUTURES

3-5 OCTOBER 2026 • DHAKA

PARTNERS

