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A Collective Commitment



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A Call for Collective Effort

Commonwealth Scholars in Bangladesh have made tremendous contributions to nation-building across diverse sectors. From policymaking and healthcare to legal reform and humanitarian development, their work continues to shape the country's progress. Yet, despite these achievements, many of these efforts remain isolated. There is enormous potential for greater impact if these individual initiatives are connected and aligned toward a common purpose.

Our efforts are strongest when they complement one another- when we harness our unique strengths and collaborate to drive meaningful change. The Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (BACSF) has taken up the mandate to unite this outstanding network of professionals into a cohesive, purpose-driven community.

The articles featured in this issue stand as powerful testament to the positive change these scholars are bringing to Bangladesh. Initiatives like the BACSF Knowledge Hub aim to serve as a national resource-centralizing knowledge and expertise for wider dissemination and advancement.

We remain committed to serving our communities through our individual contributions and our shared vision. It is vital to recognize that the opportunities many of us have received through Commonwealth scholarships or grants are rare and privileged. The majority of our population lacks access to the training, exposure, and networks that we have gained.

Through our work, we can bridge that divide- transferring knowledge, expanding access, and delivering hope. We call upon every Commonwealth Scholar and ally to respond to this call for collective action and work together to create a better, more equitable world.

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Social Business: Bringing Morality to the Market

M. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, PhD

Profit-driven modern capitalism has helped create strong economies and global trade, but at the same time, it has caused many serious problems. These include rising inequality, corporate greed, environmental damage, and a decline in moral values. The idea of the “invisible hand” in economics says that if people work for their own benefit, society will automatically benefit. But today, many researchers and economists argue that this is not true for everyone. The rich are becoming richer, while the poor are being left behind. Economist Thomas Piketty has shown in his research that inequality is rising sharply around the world. A report by Oxfam stated that the richest 1% of people own more wealth than the remaining 99%.

Researchers like Armin Falk and Andrei Shleifer have shown that too much competition in the market often leads to immoral behaviour. Competition in the market does not always help everyone equally and often harms the most vulnerable people in society. People are more likely to act immorally when profit maximization becomes the main objective. Joel Bakan argues that this profit maximization motive is likely to make individuals greedy, dishonest, and exploitative. Robert Jackall, in his book titled “Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers” has shown that the desire to maximize profitability to satisfy owners compels managers to make unethical decisions.

Sumantra Ghoshal claims that business schools have given overemphasis to profit maximization and, consequently, it has damaged corporate ethics and behaviour. As a result, some businesses damage the environment or sell unsafe products just to make more profit. Profit-driven corporate scandals like Enron and WorldCom in the USA showed how greed can destroy lives, jobs, and savings. In response to these problems, Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus introduced the idea of social business. A social business is a new kind of business that aims to solve social problems, not to make personal profit. It is different from charity because it earns enough money to run by itself. It is also different from traditional business because the owner does not take any profit.

The main purpose of a social business is to help people and bring social change. The investors can only take back their invested money, and all extra profit is reinvested into the business to expand its work. Some people have raised concerns about the idea of social business. They argue that socially oriented businesses are not new and that the idea of social business may be too vague. They also argue that social businesses may not use market signals like price and profit properly, and it is hard to measure their success. However, these criticisms can be answered clearly.



Photo: Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus speaking at the inauguration of the 15th edition of Social Business Day at Savar, in June, 2025 [Source: Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha]

Social business is not the same as corporate social responsibility (CSR), social enterprise, or social entrepreneurship. CSR often depends on donations and may stop when the money ends. Social enterprise also usually does not make enough money to run without outside help. Social entrepreneurship allows for personal profit and may not always focus on long-term social impact. But social business, as defined by Professor Yunus, is clear and different. It has two strong rules: the owner does not take any profit, and the business is built only to solve a human problem.

These rules, along with the seven guiding principles, give social business a clear identity. Critics also say that social business is not efficient because it does not follow market signals like profit and price. But in reality, many social businesses use smart and creative ideas to stay efficient. For example, Grameen Danone, a social business in Bangladesh, produces yogurt to fight child malnutrition. It sells the same product at a higher price in urban areas and at a lower price in rural areas. The extra income from the cities helps cover the cost in villages. This method is called cross-subsidy. It shows that social business can be both sustainable and effective.

Another issue is how to measure the success of social business. Since its main goal is not profit, traditional financial indicators do not work. But social impact can be measured in other ways. Research shows that small investments in health, such as iron supplements or mosquito nets, can bring big long-term income benefits for poor families. In Kenya and Indonesia, simple health interventions increased income over a lifetime. For example, Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo of MIT, in their book titled “Poor Economics” have shown that buying a mosquito net for a child, spending only USD 14, can increase his lifetime income by USD 88 per year during his adulthood. Gradually, researchers are finding ways to calculate the value of social benefits in monetary terms. But more importantly, social business focuses on improving lives, and that itself is a measure of success. However, besides focusing on social benefits, social businesses also focus on making profit for financial sustainability.

Social business also connects deeply with happiness. Studies have shown that more income does not always bring more happiness. After a certain level, income and happiness are not strongly linked. People who do kind things for others often feel happier. Professor Yunus says that in social business, investors receive happiness instead of profit. When a business helps others, the people involved feel deep emotional satisfaction. This happiness is also a form of return and should be taken seriously. In a country like Bangladesh, where poverty, malnutrition, poor healthcare, unemployment, and environmental problems still exist, social business offers a strong and practical solution. It is not dependent on charity. It is home-grown, created by a Bangladeshi for the world, and it fits well with our social and economic conditions. Professor Yunus does not say that every business must be a social business. But he encourages more people to start such businesses to reduce the social problems caused by modern capitalism.

In conclusion, social business is a moral, efficient, and people-centred way to solve social problems. It combines the strength of business with the heart of humanity. In a world facing serious challenges, social business gives us hope. It helps build a better, fairer, and more humane society. The time has come to seriously consider social business as a key part of our development efforts, not just in Bangladesh, but all over the world.

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Bioscience in the Margins: Why Bangladesh Risks Losing Its Next Generation of Researchers

Dr. Md. Firoz Ahmed

In a country of 170 million people, scientific innovation should be considered a national priority. Yet for many aspiring researchers in Bangladesh, especially in the biosciences, the reality is a long, uphill struggle with limited institutional support, outdated infrastructure, and minimal recognition. Despite a growing youth population with tremendous potential, bioscience remains a neglected sector, neither properly funded nor strategically integrated into the country's broader development agenda. As a Commonwealth Scholar trained in a worldclass research environment, I have seen what is possible when a nation invests in its scientific workforce.

Bangladesh has the talent, but without meaningful support, we risk losing a generation of promising scientists to disillusionment or migration and with them, our chances at sustainable progress in everything from agriculture to biotechnology to environmental resilience.

Bioscience in Bangladesh: Rich in Promise, Starved of Support

Bioscience spans many critical domains: food safety, environmental sustainability, industrial biotechnology, diagnostics, disease prevention, and more. It is a cornerstone for innovation, job creation, and national development. But in Bangladesh, bioscience is treated more like an academic curiosity than a strategic national asset. Most institutions lack properly equipped laboratories, access to international research tools, or mechanisms for long-term project funding. Advanced instrumentation is scarce; bureaucratic procedures delay procurement; collaboration between departments is often discouraged rather than enabled.

The result is a culture of short-termism and intellectual isolation, where even the most passionate young researchers find it difficult to stay motivated. Worse, the national research agenda rarely includes bioscience as a priority. Funding is often concentrated on a few projects in Dhaka or given to institutions with limited capacity for impactful

research or sometimes to chosen ones only! Grassroots innovation is ignored. This creates an uneven playing field and hinders the development of a robust scientific ecosystem.



Photo: Author in his laboratory

The Collaboration Deficit: Working in Silos, Losing Synergies

Another systemic issue is the lack of meaningful collaboration between academic researchers and professionals in applied sectors, whether healthcare, agriculture, or environmental management. Researchers often work in disciplinary silos with little contact with practitioners or policymakers who could benefit from their insights. This gap prevents research findings from being translated into real-world solutions.

Whether it's a new microbial strain for bioremediation, a more sustainable farming technique, or an environmentally safe biotechnology product, the path from the lab to the field is poorly defined. Students and early-career researchers rarely get opportunities to test their ideas outside academia, which severely limits innovation and impact. Without platforms for interdisciplinary collaboration or public-private partnerships, scientific findings remain trapped in journals rather than driving solutions on the ground.

A Bleak Outlook for Young Researchers

Many of my students and peers, full of potential, have eventually abandoned research careers due to the lack of institutional support, mentorship, or meaningful employment pathways. The pay is low, promotions are not linked to research achievements, and research outcomes often go unrecognized and even sometimes severely criticized! For those who study abroad, often through scholarships like the Commonwealth, returning to Bangladesh feels like stepping back in time.

A former classmate who pursued a PhD in molecular biology abroad once shared: “I want to return, but the lab I’ll get here is 10 years behind what I used as a Master’s student.” She eventually accepted a postdoctoral position overseas and remains there. This kind of “silent brain drain” is eroding our future capacity. Talented minds leave not because they lack patriotism, but because the system does not support their growth. And as more researchers leave or change fields, fewer students are inspired to enter scientific careers. The result is a self-perpetuating cycle of underachievement.

Lessons from the UK: What a Research Culture Should Look Like

During my PhD at the University of Cambridge, I experienced a research culture grounded in collaboration, mentorship, and opportunity. There were no unnecessary delays in getting materials. Lab teams operated across disciplines. Ideas were shared freely, and researchers were given the trust, tools, and time to solve complex problems.

What stood out most was how research was valued as a core contributor to society, economy, and policymaking. Scientists weren’t seen as mere academics; they were partners in shaping national progress. This sense of purpose made even the hardest work feel meaningful. That experience raised my standards not just for equipment or funding, but for what a research environment can be. I returned to Bangladesh hoping to contribute to building something similar. But without structural changes, even the most well-intentioned returnees’ risk being sidelined.

Where Do We Go from Here? Building a Bioscience Ready Nation

If Bangladesh wants to secure its future, it must take its scientists seriously across all fields of bioscience. Here are some concrete steps we can take:

Invest in Infrastructure

Equip universities and research centres with modern tools, lab space, and digital access. Without proper infrastructure, even the best ideas go nowhere.

Support Early Career Scientists

Create competitive grants and fellowships for young researchers. Offer career pathways that recognize innovation, not just seniority or administrative roles.

Encourage Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Establish platforms where biologists, chemists, engineers, and policy experts can cocreate solutions to national challenges. Link academia to industry, agriculture, and public institutions.

Facilitate Returnees’ Integration

Scholars returning from abroad should be welcomed with structured programs, startup research funds, lab space, and leadership opportunities.

Make Research Part of National Development

Include scientists in planning commissions, policy bodies, and innovation councils. Their voices are essential for data-driven, sustainable progress.

Public Recognition and Engagement

Celebrate scientific achievements in media and educational platforms. Let the youth see that science is not only valuable but vital!

Investing in Minds That Build Futures

Bangladesh has no shortage of brilliance. What we lack is the willingness to invest in the people who can turn ideas into solutions. Bioscience is not a luxury; it's a necessity for modern development. Whether we're preparing for future pandemics, adapting to climate change, or ensuring food security, we need researchers equipped and empowered to act. The youth are ready. Many still want to return, still want to serve. But time is running out. If we continue to neglect bioscience and treat research as an afterthought, we will remain dependent on external solutions. But if we choose now to believe in our scientists and build a system that supports them, we can create a future driven by knowledge, innovation, and resilience.

The choice is ours.

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Empowering the Next Generation: Practical Career Advice for Today's Youth

Dr. Gulshan Ara Latifa

Today's youths are navigating a rapidly evolving world, one shaped by technological innovation, global interconnectivity, and shifting career paradigms. As a mentor, educator, and policymaker, I have observed that while opportunities are greater than ever, confusion and anxiety about future prospects are equally prevalent. Thus, thoughtful, actionable career guidance is essential to help young minds grow with purpose and confidence.

Know Yourself First

Career planning must begin with self-awareness. What are your interests, values, strengths, and weaknesses? Reflecting on these areas helps youths identify career paths that align with their personality and passion. Tools like personality assessments or career counselling can be helpful, but even informal self-reflection is a powerful starting point.

Focus on Skills, Not Just Degrees

In today's world, employability is increasingly defined by skills, not just academic qualifications. Communication, problem-solving, digital literacy, critical thinking, and teamwork are transferable skills that employers across all sectors value. Youths should proactively seek training, internships, and volunteer work to build these competencies alongside their formal education.

Embrace Lifelong Learning

Gone are the days when one degree guaranteed a lifelong career. Today's professionals must embrace lifelong learning. Online platforms like Coursera, edX, or even YouTube offer free access to high-quality education. Whether it's learning a coding language or understanding sustainable development, continuous learning ensures career adaptability.

Balance Passion and Practicality

Yes, “follow your passion” is inspiring advice but it should be balanced with practical considerations such as job market demand, financial stability, and societal needs. For example, a student passionate about art can explore digital design, multimedia, or marketing fields that creatively align with their passion while ensuring professional viability.

The Power of Networking and Mentorship

Encourage youths to build networks early. Attending conferences, joining academic/professional associations, and connecting with alumni or industry leaders can open unexpected doors. Equally important is mentorship learning from someone who has walked the path can provide invaluable insights and encouragement.

Give Back and Stay Grounded

A meaningful career is not only about success, it’s also about service. Encourage youths to consider how their work can contribute to society. Whether through teaching, research, policymaking, or entrepreneurship, instil in them a sense of social responsibility.

Conclusion

Career planning is not a one-time decision; it is a journey of exploration, learning, and growth. Our role as mentors is to equip the next generation with the mindset, skills, and confidence to chart their own paths in a changing world. With the right guidance and determination, our youths can not only find success but also shape a better future for all.

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Rohingya Crisis: The Onward Journey to Development for Bangladesh

Sodip Roy

Bangladesh is categorized as a Least Developed Countries (LDC) even after 53 years of independence. By making significant achievement in the MDGs, it now eyes on graduation from LDC to a Developing Country by 2026 as well as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Rohingya crisis is a burgeoning issue for Bangladesh's onward journey to development. Many of us might know the narrative that 'refugees are weapons against the host country'. This statement however attracts tons of debate; refugees themselves are not responsible for this allegation at all. But they can thwart the growth, peace, and development of the host country.

Bangladesh has been a constant sanctuary of forcibly displaced Rohingya people from Myanmar since 1978. Today, their number reaches 1.3 million in the thirty-two refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. They are already straining the limited resources of Bangladesh. Their extended sanctuary has already affected the social, cultural, political, and environmental structure of the country. The estimated burden on the economy is USD 1.21 billion.

Having all the non-financial burden, Bangladesh bear yearly at least 10% cost of Rohingya response. The response for funds in the Joint Response Plan (JRP) is decreasing exponentially in the last couple of years. It is very likely in the case of the protracted refugee situation that funding will decrease in 10-12 years of hosting refugees. But this time it is happening abruptly amidst the USAID cut in the new administration in the USA. The current development of this humanitarian crisis will have longstanding effect on achieving SDGs and the graduation move for Bangladesh.

Both achieving SDGs and graduation to a developing country requires to reduce poverty and the development of the human resources. Rohingya people are not counted in our socio-economic parameters of human development. But as the host country the ultimate burden of Rohingya refugees goes to Bangladesh that holds back the development

wheel. In the worst-case scenario, it will cost a minimum USD 600 million yearly to provide them with basic needs in the camps. Bangladesh has already spent USD 31 million in developing Bhasan Char for Rohingya people. Additional spending on Rohingya people will hamper the ongoing advancement of the country. Humanitarian organizations are withdrawing themselves rapidly from the response due to a recent aid cut. Accordingly, livelihood and time-consuming programs for Rohingya people have been decreasing every day.



Photo: Author in Rohingya Camp

Rohingya people have now much idle time and thrust for income-generating activities in the host community. This tendency of the refugees will deteriorate the law and order situation as well as the cost of the camp management. Police forces are overburdened in the camp duties and many of them want to switch from the camp responsibilities to elsewhere. Moreover, deployment of more disciplinary forces in the camps is likely to hamper the regular law and order situation in other parts of the country.

Refugee is both a security and political agenda. Bangladesh and Myanmar maintain a porous border. Insurgency in Rakhine state is damaging the bilateral relationship with Myanmar and Rohingya people keep fleeing to Bangladesh to save their lives. In addition, the Arakan Army tends to create a chaotic situation with Bangladesh connecting Rohingya in the row. Import line from Myanmar too is stalled because of secessionist movement in the Rakhine state. So, Bangladesh cannot be optimistic about Look East policy with Myanmar. Being an India-locked border, Bangladesh falls at the crossroads of India and China due to unending Rohingya crisis. It is the watershed of regional peace in South and Southeast Asia.

Refugee crisis directly affects the politics of the host country from hosting to the decision to solve the crisis. Any mismanagement can destabilize the political situation of the country. Forgetting any durable solution, humanitarian corridor and localization of the humanitarian response are talk of the town regarding this crisis. Both of these agendas have political repercussions. Due to escalation of conflict in Rakhine state millions of people fall in need of humanitarian aid there too. The situation demands aids flow but humanitarian corridor is not a viable way forward of the crisis. It will be a radical decision and a permanent threat to the peace of the region. On the other hand, the international community is seeking an alternative to the Western dependency of humanitarian responses in the Global South or in the former colonies.

Failing to stand for durable solutions for refugees, the international community envisages the localization of refugee management under the policy of the Global Compact of Refugee and the Grand Bargain 2.0. Even if localization of the response is managed, there may be no point of recovery from the consequences of the humanitarian corridor. It turns into a contested agenda in the everyday politics of the country while the localization agenda of the refugee response is knocking at the door due to abrupt cut of funding.

Failure of humanitarian diplomacy will deteriorate the already volatile political condition in Bangladesh. World Bank projected an additional 3 million extreme poor this year while it is witnessing the lowest foreign direct investment in a decade. As a non-signatory of the UN Refugee Convention, Bangladesh has no capacity to tackle the burden of the millions of Rohingya people. Ideally, it will be difficult for a transitory government to convince the international community towards necessary development-related support.

Peace, justice, sustainable cities and communities are some of the goals of the SDGs that are impossible to achieve until the Rohingya refugee crisis is solved. SDGs are some highly interconnected milestones for the world that cannot be achieved leaving any of the nations behind. A country like Bangladesh needs more investment in education and human resource development for a knowledge-based society, without which SDGs remain an illusion. It is relevant in the case of Myanmar too. Stability in the region is essential for the economic growth of the country.

Rohingya crisis is rooted in the colonial legacy indeed. The international community could not hold accountable the perpetrator of genocide in Myanmar so far. Bangladesh either cannot ensure the human rights of Rohingya refugees for an extended period due to its resource scarcity. Besides, the geo-political trajectory of the region also limits the foreign policy strength of Bangladesh to a great extent.

The Global North should not withdraw support from the operation of refugee camps until a viable and long-term solution to the crisis is in place. Premature withdrawal would neither resolve the situation nor ensure the safety of those affected. There appears to be a troubling hierarchy in how international policies respond to war, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Some crisis receives urgent attention while others are neglected. Notably, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine has shown little real-world application in preventing or addressing large-scale human suffering. Instead of offering durable solutions such as repatriation, many international actors are now advocating for localization and local integration of the Rohingya population within Bangladesh.

However, this approach places increasing pressure on Bangladesh, which is already struggling to maintain its development trajectory. As the country aspires to graduate from LDC status and achieve the SDGs, it may also face growing moral and diplomatic pressure to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention. To address this complex paradox between managing the protracted Rohingya crisis and sustaining national development, Bangladesh urgently needs a strong internal political consensus and proactive international advocacy.

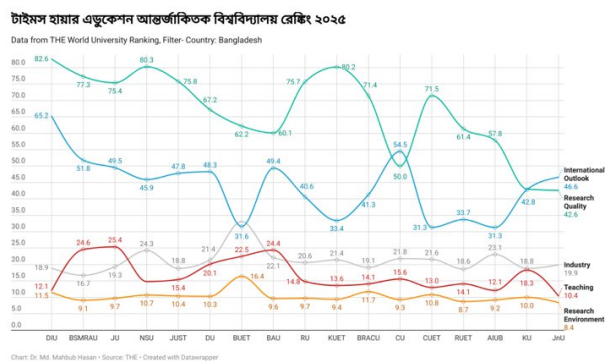
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Why We Lag: Unveiling the Barriers in World University Rankings

Dr. Md. Mahbub Hasan

On 9 October, 2024, the Times Higher Education World University Ranking for 2025 was published. This year, a total of 17 universities from Bangladesh made to the list, including four private and thirteen public universities. Notably, eight universities are appearing in the rankings for the first time, including the country’s top performer, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU). These universities are categorized into four groups: Group A (ranks 800–1000), Group B (ranks 1001–1200), Group C (ranks 1201–1500), and Group D (ranked above 1500).

Group A includes BSMRAU, Daffodil International University, Jahangirnagar University, Jessore University of Science and Technology, and North South University. Group B features Bangladesh Agricultural University, BUET, BRAC University, CUET, KUET, University of University, and Rajshahi University. Group C includes American International University Bangladesh, Khulna University, RUET, and the University of Chittagong. Group D contains only Jagannath University.



The factors determining a university’s position in the ranking can be understood by examining the individual indicators. Since 2016, University of Dhaka has been the only Bangladeshi institution in this prestigious ranking. However, this year, University of Dhaka has experienced a decline in its position to ranks 1001–1200. In the past two

years, it ranked between 600–800 and 801–1000, respectively. A closer examination of the five indicators used in the ranking (teaching, research environment, research quality, industry income, and international outlook; 500 points in total, later converted to 100 points using a weighted average) reveals the reasons behind this decline. University of Dhaka lost points in two key areas over the past two years. The “Research Quality” score, which stood at 85.9 points in 2023, and dropped to 67.2. The second indicator, “Industry Income” which assesses university income from industry and the number of patents, saw a decline from 37.3 points in 2023 to 21.4. All other indicators have either increased or remained the same.

Importantly, the contribution from the other indicators to the overall score University of Dhaka secured is about half of what “Research Quality” contributes. This leads to conducting a comparative analysis of the points earned by the 17 universities across various indicators, providing an overview of Bangladesh’s standing in the rankings. Of the five indicators, three are crucial, contributing 90% of the total score. All 17 universities have performed relatively well in the “Research Quality” category (ranging from Jagannath University’s lowest score of 42.6 to Daffodil University’s highest score of 82.6). This indicator evaluates the number of citations (how often a university’s research is cited in other works), research strength (how many papers rank among the top 10% in their field), research excellence (how much research leads the field globally), and research influence (the level of recognition within the academic community).

Now, let’s consider the other two indicators. Although Bangladesh’s universities have done well in “Research Quality” despite limited resources, they lag significantly in the “Research Environment” category (from Jagannath University’s 8.4 points to BUET’s 16.4 points). This indicator assesses the quality of the research environment through global academic surveys, the amount of research funding obtained, and the number of publications per faculty member. One of the main barriers to improvement in this area is the lack of research that is pioneering on an international level.

Insufficient funding is also a significant hindrance to experimental, application-based research. Although local industries in Bangladesh have done a great job in producing day-to-day necessities like medicines and electronic accessories, mainly through assembly-based processes and tech-transfer contracts, this has hindered strong industry-academia research ties. As a result, Bangladesh lacks “homegrown research products” which are crucial for achieving international recognition.

Next, we turn to the “Teaching” indicator, which consists of five sub-indicators. The most important sub-indicator is “teaching reputation” determined through independent surveys conducted within the academic community. Another sub-indicator is the

“Doctorate staff ratio” reflecting the number of doctoral degrees awarded per faculty member, which is notably low in Bangladesh. For instance, data from the University of Chittagong indicates that, on average, about one in ten faculty members supervises a doctoral student. Another sub-indicator, the Doctorate-Bachelor ratio, compares the number of doctoral degrees awarded to the number of bachelor's degrees awarded (this ratio is 4:100 at the University of Chittagong).

Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, the doctoral study programme is not well-structured, and the funding available for doctoral studies is inadequate. Moreover, the financial support for long-term doctoral research projects is limited. Unless this programme is expanded and incorporated into the regular curriculum of universities across Bangladesh, it will be difficult to secure a strong score in this indicator. The remaining sub-indicators are the student-to-staff ratio and institutional income. The latter reflects the institution's ability to invest in quality education and research. Sadly, apart from government subsidies, public universities in Bangladesh have very limited income, reflecting their poor ability to provide cutting-edge facilities for both teachers and students to enhance the teaching-learning process.

In conclusion, recent media discussions have encouraged universities to submit their data to ranking authorities, and faculty members are increasingly focused on publishing research. However, they are still struggling to improve their rankings overall due to the lack of long-term planning to make the universities self-sustaining in terms of income and innovative, need-based teaching and research. A review of the indicators used in the World University Ranking reveals that the key reasons for the lower positions of Bangladeshi universities in international rankings include a lack of pioneering research, insufficient investment in such projects, financial dependence on the government, a lack of innovation in teaching and research, heavy reliance on undergraduate programmes, and the inadequate development of research programmes.

Overcoming these challenges will require thoughtful planning, strong commitment, and increased investment. Only these initiatives, particularly in public universities, can offer equity in education, uplift the status and well-being of the general population, and sustain the motivation behind recent student-led uprisings.

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The Blue Economy of Bangladesh: Status, Challenges & Strategic Pathways Forward

Syed M. Istiak

The Blue Economy of Bangladesh encompasses the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources to drive inclusive economic growth, enhance livelihoods, and ensure marine ecosystem sustainability. Following the successful resolution of maritime boundary disputes with Myanmar (2012) and India (2014), Bangladesh gained sovereign control over 118,813 sq. km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Bay of Bengal, opening vast opportunities in ecosystem business like fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, offshore energy, marine biotechnology, and coastal eco-tourism.

Despite this potential, progress remains slow, hindered by institutional inertia, financial, technological, and governance challenges. This article provides an updated assessment of Bangladesh's Blue Economy, analyses key obstacles, and outlines strategic recommendations for sustainable growth.

Barriers to Progress: Why the Blue Economy Lags Behind

Lack of a Unified National Blue Economy Policy

Though the Blue Economy Cell was established under the Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources in 2014, there is no officially adopted national policy or strategy. The Blue Economy Development Work Plan (BEDWP) lacks enforceable timelines and cross-ministerial execution. Absence of a dedicated, empowered central authority to oversee maritime governance results in duplication and policy silos among the ministries of Fisheries, Shipping, Environment, and Energy.

Institutional and Capacity Constraints

Human capital in key areas such as marine sciences, oceanography, deep-sea fishing, and maritime governance is limited. Marine research and education institution, including the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh Maritime University, Department of Oceanography at Dhaka University, BUET, and the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) face shortages of experienced and knowledgeable personnel, as well

as inadequate access to advanced technology and equipment. The absence of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) hinders sustainable resource allocation. Although the World Bank has recently initiated efforts to develop a comprehensive MSP, the lack of reliable and credentialed data has delayed its completion. Inadequate infrastructure for deep-sea exploration, offshore renewable energy, and marine biotechnology continues to limit sectoral growth and innovation.

Insufficient Investment and Finance

Sectors like offshore energy, biotechnology, and deep-sea fishing require high upfront capital and long ROI cycles, deterring both domestic and international investors. Budget allocation remains negligible: only BDT 2 billion is proposed for blue economy research in the FY 2025–26 budget. Bangladesh has yet to tap into blue bonds, blended finance, or climate funds like the Green Climate Fund.

Limited Marine Resource Assessment

No comprehensive marine resource inventory or ocean mapping has been completed. Overexploitation of fisheries (e.g., declining hilsa, snapper, pomfret, shrimp and Indian salmon stocks) continues due to outdated catch data and enforcement. Potential in gas hydrates, polymetallic nodules/seabed minerals, and marine genetic resources remains untapped.

Underdeveloped Maritime Infrastructure

Major seaports (Chattogram, Mongla, Payra) need upgrades to match global standards. Bangladesh lacks deep-sea fishing vessels, its EEZ contributes under 685,000 tons/year, while regional competitors like India, Thailand, and Myanmar harvest over 8 million tons. Weak cold chain logistics and processing infrastructure hurt seafood exports.

Regulatory and Legal Gaps

The Maritime Zones Act (2015) is underutilized and does not address pollution, offshore mining, or IUU fishing effectively. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in blue economy sectors remains low due to regulatory ambiguity and perceived risk. Absence of marine zoning laws, environmental standards, and investor protection mechanisms remains a challenge.

Environmental and Climate Threats

Coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, mangrove loss, and coral reef degradation are increasing. Marine pollution from shipbreaking (Sitakunda), plastic waste, and untreated industrial discharge poses a growing threat. Climate change-driven sea-level rise and cyclonic storm surges are displacing coastal communities and harming marine biodiversity.

Lack of Stakeholder Engagement

Local fishing communities are often excluded from policy consultations. The private sector lacks awareness and sees marine projects as high risk, low yield. No formal frameworks for co-management or benefit-sharing at the community level.

Year	Initiative	Status
2014	Blue Economy Cell (MoPEMR)	Formed, limited effectiveness
2015	Maritime Zones Act	Enacted, limited enforcement
2018	Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100	Focus on coastal resilience
2020	Perspective Plan 2041	Blue economy included as key sector
2022	Draft National Blue Economy Policy	Under review
2025	Tk 2 billion allocation for blue research	Proposed (FY 2025-26 Budget)

Table: Key Government Initiatives (2014–2025)

Emerging Opportunities in the Bay of Bengal

Despite the challenges, Bangladesh’s blue economy offers high-value, sustainable growth potential:

Marine Fisheries & Aquaculture

- Untapped deep-sea fishing opportunities beyond 60 km offshore.
- Expansion of shrimp, seabass, tuna, crab, pomfret and seaweed aquaculture for export.
- High-value seafood processing and value-added products.

Offshore Renewable Energy

- Estimated potential of 5–7 GW in offshore wind and tidal power.
- Natural gas and gas hydrate deposits could enhance energy security.

Marine Biotechnology

- Bioactive compounds from marine organisms for use in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and nutraceuticals.
- Prospects in marine enzymes, omega-3 oils, and biodegradable polymers.

Port Development and Shipbuilding

- The Payra Deep Sea Port could serve as a regional transshipment hub.
- Potential to scale up shipbuilding and ship repair, creating jobs and export revenue.

Eco-Tourism and Coastal Development

- Untapped potential in marine tourism at Cox’s Bazar, St. Martin’s Island, and the Sundarbans.
- Opportunities for community-based tourism, cruise infrastructure, and marine parks.



Photo: Employees engaged in packaging at a seafood processing plant in Kaliganj, Satkhira

Strategic Recommendations for Blue Economy Acceleration

Finalize & Implement the National Blue Economy Policy

- Ensure the policy is cross-sectoral, time-bound, and linked to SDG 14 and UNCLOS.
- Integrate Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) to reduce resource conflict and promote ecosystem health.

Create a Dedicated Blue Economy Authority

Establish a Bangladesh Blue Economy Ministry to coordinate other ministries, departments, develop projects, and liaise with donors and investors.

Strengthen Research & Human Capital

- Scale up investment in oceanographic research, marine biotechnology, and fisheries science.
- Partner with countries like Norway, Japan, and the Netherlands for capacity building and technology transfer.

Unlock Investment through Offshore loan, foreign loan, PPPs and Blue Finance

- Introduce tax breaks and investment incentives for blue sectors.

Feature Article

- Launch sovereign blue bonds and pursue green/blue climate finance mechanisms.

Reform Legal & Regulatory Frameworks

- Update and enforce laws on marine conservation, IUU fishing, offshore licensing, and pollution control.
- Introduce coastal zoning regulations and FDI-friendly guidelines.

Ensure Security and Surveillance

- Modernize coast guard and naval capacity with satellite monitoring and AIS tracking.
- Improve maritime domain awareness to protect marine sovereignty and resources.

A Blue Future is Possible, If Acted Upon Now

Bangladesh's Blue Economy has the potential to generate USD 6–10 billion annually by 2040, support 2–3 million jobs, and contribute significantly to climate resilience, food security, and export diversification. But to unlock this potential, Bangladesh must act decisively and finalize and implement a clear national policy, mobilize blue finance, strengthen research, institutions, and governance and empower coastal communities and investors

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Beyond Courtrooms: Rethinking Legal Profession in a Borderless, Interdisciplinary World

Shahrima Tanjin Arni

The legal profession, long viewed through the narrow lens of classrooms and courtrooms, is quietly undergoing a revolution. While public imagination still clings to the image of the suited-up advocates arguing passionately before a judge, the reality is far more expansive and far more exciting.

We are at a moment in history where there are more legal jobs than we can currently imagine. Law is no longer confined to litigation, chambers, or even compliance departments. From designing ethical AI governance to assessing electoral fairness, law graduates are stepping into roles that did not exist a decade ago. A legal education is now a passport to not just multiple jobs, but multiple types of jobs.

What's changing? First, the workplace is no longer confined to "home" in either the literal or metaphorical sense.

A law graduate from Bangladesh today holds the potential to work anywhere in the world, be it in academia or legal practice, by pursuing a well-chosen graduate degree. With global legal challenges becoming increasingly interconnected, international institutions, law firms, and universities actively seek professionals who understand both local nuances and global frameworks. A postgraduate degree from a reputed institution, especially in fields like commercial law, international law, human rights, technology law, or comparative legal studies, equips Bangladeshi graduates with the credentials and confidence to teach, research, or practice across borders.

Whether it's contributing to international criminal law in the Hague, teaching legal theory in London, or advising multinationals on compliance in Dubai, a graduate degree transforms geographical boundaries into stepping stones.

On the other hand, a law professional can advise a Kenyan startup on privacy and data protection law while living in Dhaka, or draft climate litigation strategies for a USA-based NGO while sipping coffee in Chattogram. Remote work, enabled by technology and globalization, is collapsing borders and diluting the centrality of bar councils and domestic jurisdictions. Thus, the law is gradually leaving the court and entering the cloud!



Photo: Author at University of Cambridge as a Commonwealth Scholar convening the 12th Annual Cambridge International Law Conference featuring Georg Nolte, Judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as the key note speaker

Finally, we are witnessing a surge in non-legal professions where a legal background is an asset, not an afterthought. Think policy advisors, governance experts, digital ethicists, public interest strategists, or ESG investment analysts. Big techs like Google, Meta or TikTok has positions for policy manager. International organizations including the UN, the World Bank, the Commonwealth or IMF etc. host positions that suit law graduates and professionals. These are not roles for which traditional law school trains you. Yet, lawyers are filling them by becoming learners again, absorbing everything from coding to carbon pricing to politics. In doing so, they are redefining what it means to be a legal professional.

This brings us to the real crux: studying law, by itself, is no longer enough. In an interconnected world, the law does not operate in isolation. It dances with data, interacts with ideology, and is powered by numbers. How can we understand the fairness of predictive policing without statistics? How can we evaluate competition in digital markets without economics? Or grasp consent in AI systems without philosophy? Legal education that remains allergic to general disciplines is not just outdated; it is a damaging to students. Interdisciplinarity is not a buzzword. It is the need of the time.

So, to young legal minds wondering if there's life beyond the gavel, there is! There is a universe of opportunities waiting for those bold enough to combine legal training with curiosity, technological fluency, and interdisciplinary courage. Law is not shrinking; it is expanding, leaking into every field that shapes society. We must evolve with it or risk becoming experts in a world that no longer exists.

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Urban Waste Management in Bangladesh: Burdens or Benefits?

Dr. Kishwar Jahan Sethi

Bangladesh, with its rapidly growing urban population, faces an increasingly complex waste management crisis. Cities like Dhaka, Chittagong, and Khulna generate thousands of tons of waste daily. Major sources include market and kitchen waste, municipal solid waste and waste from urban gardening and landscaping. Such sources are common in any metropolitan city of the world but in Bangladesh these generate a burden due to lack of proper waste management infrastructure. Therefore, regular clogging of drainage system makes urban life miserable. Open dumping and burning are an addition to increasing threat of air and soil pollution and unplanned decomposition of organic matter leads to methane release- a potent greenhouse gas to our environment.

Improper waste disposal contributes to the proliferation of diseases such as dengue and diarrhoea. The situation is exacerbated by a general lack of public awareness regarding the environmental and health risks associated with inadequate waste management, as well as insufficient knowledge on effective waste management practices. UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) arranged a roundtable discussion October last year addressing the solid waste management. They reported that Bangladesh generates approximately 25,000 tons of waste per day, with cities like Dhaka managing nearly 6,500 tons daily, projected to reach 8,500 tons by 2032. They highlighted that 55% of solid waste in urban areas remains uncollected, exacerbating pollution, public health risks, and climate change. If this situation continues, our existing waste management system will be unable to cope, resulting in an unsustainable burden.

Bangladesh requires a comprehensive strategy to develop a sustainable waste management framework that involves the government, industry, and civil society. The adoption of the 3R approach: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, is imperative for improving current conditions. This includes investing in research and development of alternatives to single-use plastics, holding businesses accountable for their environmental impacts,

and promoting domestic waste segregation. With effective policies, technologies, and mindset, the waste management burden can be transformed into benefits, offering environmental, economic, and social rewards.

Initially, urban waste management laws need to be strengthened and enforced prudently. Proper regulation and support through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) is essential to develop urban waste processing and recycling chains. Engaging the urban community through awareness campaigns, training programs, and incentives for citizens is crucial. Moreover, modern and feasible approaches must be adopted to convert organic waste into resources. Research initiatives should aim to inspire mass participation in turning plant and kitchen waste into compost and encourage entrepreneurs to invest in green industries.

A collaborative approach involving the government, researchers, entrepreneurs, and urban residents could positively propel the current situation. Examples of such initiatives include biogas plants to generate renewable biofuels, biochar production to enhance agricultural soil health, creating livestock feed, producing dyes from plant waste, and developing biodegradable plastics, packaging, or paper. Increasing public awareness and interest in earning revenue from waste can further support this transformation. Both private sectors and municipalities can benefit financially from waste-to-energy projects, recycling contracts, and carbon credits.

The costs incurred by the government to collect and dispose of market and domestic plant wastes can be converted into profits through the establishment and execution of waste recycling and remarketing as part of the green industry. Currently, several pilot projects and research studies are conducted by universities (e.g., BUET, BAU, BRRI) and NGOs. More community-level support, training programs, subsidies, incentives for entrepreneurs, and encouragement of related research and carbon financing mechanisms can foster an environment conducive to sustainable and developed urban facilities.

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From Facebook Alert to Food Security: How Bangladesh & UK Scientists Outraced a Wheat Pandemic

Dr. Tofazzal Islam

In 2016, Bangladesh faced an unprecedented agricultural emergency when wheat blast - a devastating fungal disease suddenly appeared, wiping out entire crops across 15,000 hectares in eight southwestern districts. The unknown pathogen destroyed up to 100% of yields in affected areas, reducing national wheat production by 15% and threatening food security. With no local experts available to combat this crisis, the situation grew increasingly desperate. In a controversial move, the government deployed firefighters to burn infected fields, a drastic measure that spread panic among vulnerable farming communities already struggling with economic hardship.

Then, on 1 March, 2016, a breakthrough came from an unexpected source. Professor Sophien Kamoun FRS (The Sainsbury Laboratory, UK) read a Daily Star report about the outbreak and sounded the alarm in a Facebook post and Tweet. I responded immediately, and within hours, our messages crossed continents: “Let’s fight this together.” Sophien’s lab had just developed “field pathogenomics” a cutting-edge genomic surveillance tool for rapid disease identification. That same night, as Dhaka slept, we drafted an emergency battle plan to combat this wheat-killing menace. The pathogen, we soon learned, was a familiar foe: a mutated strain of *Magnaporthe oryzae* Triticum pathotype, which had ravaged South America since 1985 after emerging from ryegrass in Brazil’s Paraná region.

At dawn, my students Pallab Bhattacharjee and Md Shaid Hossain raced into the blast zones, Meherpur, Jessore, Jhenaidah, Kushtia, and Chuadanga, collecting infected and healthy wheat leaves before they decayed. Some samples were preserved in RNA later, locking in their RNA for analysis, while others were rushed to the lab for pathogen isolation and Koch’s postulates, the gold standard for disease confirmation. The precious RNA cargo was then flown to Norwich, UK, for further investigation. There, The Genome Analysis Centre (now Earlham Institute) in Norwich Research Park conducted RNA sequencing. Using Trinity software, we assembled the short reads

(fragments) only to uncover a shocking gap in knowledge: just one wheat blast genome (BR32) existed in NCBI's public database.

'Thirty-one years of global research, yet almost no shared data?' Sophien Kamoun was stunned. His bold response: 'We'll build an open fortress'. We launched a global crowdsourcing effort, gathering hidden genomes from researchers worldwide and sharing all our sequence data openly on Open Wheat Blast, a dedicated platform. This pioneering move marked the first major open-data initiative for a plant pathogen since the Zika virus outbreak. Our press release, "Scientists Issue Rallying Cry for Wheat Blast Research" made waves in Nature, Science, and hundreds of scientific outlets. The response was immediate.

Thirty-one scientists across four continents shared critical data and joined the mission. Laboratories at the University of Exeter (UK), ETH Zurich (Switzerland), and INRA (France) analysed sequences in unison, revealing a startling truth. Bangladesh's outbreak stemmed from a clonal lineage of South American *M. oryzae*. In weeks, the public genome count surged from one to fifty, with independent labs worldwide confirming the findings. Yet, CIMMYT's chilling warning loomed: 'Close the portal. Implicate imports, and you may disappear'. Despite the risks, I stood firm with science.



Photo: Professor Sophien, Professor Nick and author inspecting a blast devastated wheat field in Meherpur, Bangladesh

The breakthrough hit the front page of Prothom Alo, 'Gomer Shotru Sonakto (Enemy of Wheat Detected)!' Within hours, the then Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury summoned me. With trembling hands but irrefutable proof, my team and I presented 64 minutes of genomic evidence. 'Who paid for this?' she inquired. 'Our own pockets, Minister. A nation can't wait for invoices.' Her stern gaze softened, she even gifted us a Bangladesh heritage poster (floating gardens). The next day, Prothom Alo's

headline declared, “Government Stands with Wheat’s Defenders”. This marked a turning point: with the pathogen precisely identified, Bangladesh could now make science-driven policies to combat future epidemics.

Our groundbreaking collaborative work was published on BioRxiv within six weeks, marking my first major contribution to open science. Six months later, a full-length article appeared in BMC Biology, a leading flagship journal. Bangladesh successfully averted the crisis seen in India, where West Bengal declared a “wheat holiday” in 2017 after massive crop burnings in Nadia and Murshidabad. When Zambia faced a similar outbreak in 2018, Dr. Batisaba Tembo courageously shared pathogen samples with us. Genetic fingerprinting confirmed both outbreaks originated from Brazil’s B71 lineage, likely spread through imported wheat grains (PLOS Biology).

To combat further spread, we developed a CRISPR-based point-of-care diagnostic kit in collaboration with researchers in China and USA, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation/FCDO, now deployed across Asia and Africa for port-side and field screening. Our UK-Bangladesh collaboration expanded with BBSRC’s global challenge funding to develop blast-resistant wheat through genome editing using CRISPR-Cas technology. In partnership with Prof. Yukio Tosa (Kobe University), we developed immune lines by stacking a blast resistance gene, Rmg8 into BARI Gom 33, which carries a blast resistance 2NS chromosomal segment. Two of my students, Nur Uddin Mahmud and Sanjoy Kumar Paul, gained hands-on training in cutting-edge methods at The Sainsbury Laboratory under Prof. Sophien Kamoun and Prof. Nick Talbot.

The Open Wheat Blast initiative earned Prof. Sophien Kamoun the 2023 Innovation and Impact Award from the University of East Anglia (UEA) for outstanding policy influence. I was honoured with the Commonwealth Innovation Award (2019) and Islamic Development Bank Prize (2018) for advancing solutions to wheat blast through frontier science and global collaboration. Together with Prof. Sophien, FRS and Prof. Nick Talbot, FRS, this partnership exemplifies how science-driven alliances can tackle global food security threats. Though neither hosted me during my Commonwealth Academic Fellowship at Nottingham, both became pivotal collaborators. I look forward to further breakthroughs that strengthen food and nutritional security worldwide.

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From Vulnerability to Agency: Critical Reflections on Migration Scholarship in Bangladesh

Ishrar Habib

Not too long after completing my MSc in Global Migration at University College London's Department of Geography with Commonwealth Scholarship and returning home, I noticed a striking shift in the way many Bangladeshi professionals living abroad were thinking about citizenship and mobility. In the wake of a massive political change in Bangladesh in July 2024, a new social media camping emerged in August 2024: #reverse_brain_drain_bd.

This digital trend rapidly gained momentum, driven by young, skilled Bangladeshis openly expressing their aspirations to return and contribute to rebuilding the country. On the 4th of August in 2024, just a day before the resignation of the past regime under intense public pressure and mass demonstrations, over 50 Bangladeshi students and professionals abroad began posting under #ReverseBrainDrainBD tag on Facebook, asking: Could we return? Could we contribute to a new Bangladesh? This campaign marks a shift in narrative, from leaving at all costs, to considering return.

I felt compelled to explore this phenomenon, as it directly challenged the dominant narrative of migration as a one-way escape from Bangladesh, a narrative that often portrays emigration as the ultimate goal for educated and ambitious individuals. Instead, what I observed was a more complex, hopeful story of circular migration, transnational belonging, and the desire to participate in change. Consequently, I decided to present my initial findings about this important emerging trend at a global conference. While this article is not about my research into this topic, it is about a few reflections on the study of migration as currently practiced in Bangladesh.

This article is shaped by the perspective I gained while independently carrying out this simplistic research and visiting the UK in 2025 to present my insights on the mentioned

#reverse_brain_drain_bd online campaign at the Migration Conference taking place at the University of Greenwich in London from 11-13 June 2025. Organized by Transnational Press London and Greenwich University, the conference brought together about 500 researchers, practitioners, and policymakers from around the world, and it underscored for me just how urgent and relevant migration studies have become in our time, when questions of mobility, identity, and return are reshaping societies in ways that demand thoughtful engagement and critical reflection.

One of the first things I realized throughout the process of conducting my own research on this topic and presenting it at the conference is that Bangladeshi scholarship on migration remains remarkably narrow in scope. Much of the existing literature focuses primarily on refugees, examined almost exclusively through a statist lens, particularly emphasizing security concerns. In parallel, migration is commonly framed through the development paradigm, which tends to centre on labour mobility and remittances. This dominant framing reinforces the image of migrants as either vulnerable individuals needing protection or as instruments of development to be managed.



Photo: Author at the Migration Conference taking place at the University of Greenwich in London from 11-13 June 2025

What remains largely overlooked are the experiences and implications of student and professional migration. Despite widespread claims that such movements are

precipitating brain drain and creating far more complex outcomes for both origin and destination countries, scholars in Bangladesh have not systematically studied these dynamics. As a result, there is a significant dearth of rigorous academic work and reliable statistics capturing the full length and breadth of youth emigration and skilled migration from Bangladesh. This lack of attention not only obscures the impact of these trends on the source country but also ignores how Bangladeshis abroad are shaping transnational identities, contributing to new societies, and giving back in ways that go well beyond remittances, including through digital activism and civic engagement with their homeland.

My second realization is that social media has become a powerful medium and tool, yet scholars often turn a blind eye to social media discourse analysis as an important methodological approach for understanding people's motives, trends, and aspirations regarding migration and belonging. Far beyond quantitative data, the comments and posts themselves and specifically the language people choose offer rich insights into how citizenship and belonging are perceived within a national community.

For example, in my research, I conducted a social media discourse analysis to uncover the dominant narratives emerging from the posts of Bangladeshi residents abroad using the hashtag associated with the campaign. I found that these posts were highly emotionally charged and often did not translate into concrete steps toward return migration. However, by actively campaigning with a "reverse brain drain" motto in the wake of major political change, the diaspora community powerfully demonstrated that leaving the country does not equate to the end of civic engagement.

Third, the expressed willingness of non-resident Bangladeshis to contribute to rebuilding their country amid a shifting political landscape revealed not only that their sense of belonging remains strong but also that their agency is intact. This suggests that if a meritocratic system of recruitment and meaningful opportunities were established, many would be willing to return and actively participate in national development. This particular case illustrates that although migrants may at times be compelled by external circumstances, their sense of agency endures, they remain the authors of their own destinies.

It presents a more nuanced image of the diaspora, countering the dominant portrayals of migrants either as passive victims or as economic contributors solely through remittances. Relocation does not always signify victimhood; it can be an empowering choice. Similarly, giving back to one's country cannot be defined only in monetary terms, it can also take shape through political participation and digital activism that sustains transnational ties and a shared vision for the future.

Concurrently, while participating in this conference and, indeed, in almost any global scholarly gathering—I have noticed an almost singular focus on climate change-induced internal migration from Bangladeshi scholars. Although this is undoubtedly an important phenomenon, it has led to a rather generic and predictable image of the Bangladeshi migrant on the global stage. Not enough Bangladeshi scholars are engaging with the wider spectrum of migration trends, including the experiences of skilled migrants, students, and professionals who have moved abroad on their own credentials to pursue better opportunities while continuing to engage meaningfully with their homeland.

Finally, migrants are not always passive victims of circumstance or subjects of white-saviour narratives, nor are they merely photographs taken and presented to evoke pity. They are also agents of change in the global economy and society. This was vividly illustrated to me in an unexpected way: during a conversation with a Bangladeshi cab driver based in the UK for about 20 years, I learned how Bangladeshis now occupy most head chef positions in Italian restaurants across the UK and Europe and often go on to become shareholders and business owners themselves. What I ultimately realized is that these stories of migrants as empowered, politically active contributors/agents are still waiting to be told more widely on the global stage.

We need to forge a narrative that recognizes migrants not only as vulnerable populations but also as individuals shaping and enriching the societies they join. Reflecting on this research journey and my participation in international scholarly forums, I feel that migration scholarship on Bangladesh needs a more expansive, nuanced approach. The prevailing narratives whether centered on refugees, remittances, or climate displacement offer only partial glimpses of a much more complex reality. By focusing narrowly on vulnerability and crisis, we risk overlooking the agency, aspirations, and contributions of millions of Bangladeshis who move for education, professional growth, and the pursuit of dignity.

Social media discourse analysis proved to be a powerful tool in uncovering these overlooked stories. It revealed not only the emotional landscapes of migration but also the enduring sense of belonging and willingness to contribute among non-resident Bangladeshis. Their experiences challenge simplistic assumptions that migration necessarily severs civic ties or reduces migrants to passive subjects of policy and charity.

Similarly, everyday encounters like conversations with Bangladeshis who have carved out entrepreneurial and leadership roles across Europe demonstrate that migration can

be a story of empowerment as much as adversity. These perspectives remind us that migrants are not merely beneficiaries of development or victims of geopolitical forces. They are agents of change whose transnational engagements reshape economies, cultures, and societies both at home and abroad.

As scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, we have a responsibility to document and amplify these diverse experiences. Only then can we move beyond clichés and build a more accurate, dignified, and inclusive understanding of migration, a narrative that does justice to the resilience and agency of those who cross borders.

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A Journey Beyond Borders: Enrichment Through My LL.M. in the UK under the Commonwealth Scholarship

Dr. Aminul Islam

The opportunity to pursue a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Human Rights Law at the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom, under the prestigious Commonwealth Scholarship for the 2014–2015 session, remains one of the most defining chapters of my life. As a serving member of the Bangladesh Judiciary, this experience added profound depth to my legal perspective, strengthening both my commitment to justice and my understanding of human rights in a global context.

A Life-Changing Scholarship

Being selected for the Commonwealth Scholarship by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) was both an honour and a transformative opportunity. The selection was highly competitive and recognised academic merit, leadership potential, and a commitment to contributing to one's home country. As a full scholarship covering tuition, travel, and living expenses, it enabled me to fully dedicate myself to academic and professional growth in a world-class environment. However, the scholarship's impact extended far beyond financial support. It served as a gateway to meaningful global engagement, prestigious academic platforms, and exposure to policymaking circles that deeply shaped my worldview. It connected me to peers and mentors from around the Commonwealth, all committed to progress, equity, and shared learning.

Life at Liverpool: A Red-Brick University with Global Reach

The University of Liverpool, part of the UK's esteemed Russell Group, provided an intellectually rich and diverse environment. The LL.M. in International Human Rights Law introduced me to critical subjects such as refugee law, international humanitarian law, civil liberties, and transitional justice. The academic rigour and comparative approach expanded my thinking beyond the domestic legal context. Liverpool itself, with its maritime history, cultural vibrancy, and musical legacy, enriched my time in the UK. Exploring the city's historical relationship with migration, justice, and identity

deepened my appreciation for the socio-cultural foundations of law. From the Beatles' heritage to the welcoming multicultural communities, Liverpool became a second home.

Global Dialogues and Democratic Ideals

The Commonwealth Scholarship enabled me to participate in several distinguished international forums. A particular highlight was my selection to attend the International Parliamentary Conference on Human Rights in the Modern-Day Commonwealth, held at the UK Houses of Parliament in February 2015. The event, commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, brought together parliamentarians and scholars from across the Commonwealth. Standing before the last four surviving original copies of the Magna Carta was a moment of profound reflection. It was a powerful reminder of the centuries-old struggle for justice, accountability, and the rule of law.



Photo: The author walking across Westminster Bridge on the way to attend the International Parliamentary Conference held in 2015 at the Houses of Parliament, London, United Kingdom as a Commonwealth Scholar.”

Participating in parliamentary debates at the House of Lords alongside legislators from across the Commonwealth allowed me to witness firsthand how international human rights norms influence legislative practices in diverse legal systems. This rare experience was made possible solely because of the Commonwealth Scholarship,

highlighting its impact not only on academic enrichment but also on policy engagement and democratic values.

A Scholarly Exchange at Oxford

As part of the Commonwealth Scholars' Regional Network, I had the privilege of attending a conference at Hertford College, University of Oxford. This gathering provided a platform to exchange views with fellow scholars on law, education, and governance. The academic energy and historical aura of Oxford left a lasting impression on my intellectual journey.

Celebrating 50 Years of the Commonwealth Secretariat

Another memorable occasion was attending the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Secretariat at Marlborough House, London. Hosted by then Secretary-General Mr. Kamallesh Sharma, the garden party offered an opportunity to engage with diplomats, academics, and civil society leaders. It was a vivid reminder of the Commonwealth's legacy and its commitment to peace, democracy, and development.

A Warm Farewell at the FCDO

My scholarship journey concluded with a farewell event at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), where I met the President of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission and exchanged reflections with peers. The elegant surroundings of the FCDO symbolised the dignity and responsibility associated with the scholarship. It marked both an end and a beginning, the start of a lifelong mission to apply the knowledge gained for the benefit of my country.

A Launchpad for Higher Research

The intellectual stimulus and personal growth I experienced during my LL.M. inspired me to pursue further research. I later completed a PhD in Law at the University of Sussex, focusing on accountability in UN peacekeeping and the protection of civilians. This work, now published by Routledge, builds directly on the foundation laid during my time as a Commonwealth Scholar. Today, as I carry out my responsibilities in the judicial and administrative service of Bangladesh, I continue to draw on the values and insights gained through the scholarship. Whether advising on legal reform, adjudicating cases, or mentoring younger professionals, the impact of that year in the UK echoes throughout my work.

A Legacy That Lives On

The Commonwealth Scholarship was more than an academic grant, it was a catalyst for leadership, growth, and change. It connected me to a broader community striving for

justice and inspired me to view my work through an international lens. It reaffirmed my belief that education is the most powerful tool for public service.

For those aspiring to make a difference in their communities and beyond, the Commonwealth Scholarship remains a beacon. It changes lives, not just of the scholars, but of all those they go on to serve. I remain deeply grateful for the opportunity and committed to the ideals it represents. The journey that began at the University of Liverpool continues to guide and inspire me every day.

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From Bangladesh to Global Platforms or From Roots to Global Reach: Climate Action, Scholarship, and Guiding the Next Generation

Muhammad Ferdous

From humble beginnings in Bangladesh to the transformation of global discourse on disaster resilience, youth empowerment, and humanitarian innovation, my path has been guided by a single principle: meaningful impact. I have endeavoured to establish a connection between knowledge and action, particularly for the youth of Bangladesh, in a variety of settings, including lecture halls, refugee camps, international conferences, and remote communities that are susceptible to disasters.

Nurturing Minds and Building Resilience

I have had the honour of educating the next generation of disaster risk professionals in the role of as a Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Postgraduate Programs in Disaster Management (PPDM) at BRAC University. Our curriculum encompasses a wide range of subjects, including negotiation, emergency strategies, and conflict and humanitarian response. This curriculum frequently necessitates direct interaction with international institutions, NGOs, and law enforcement.

Drawing on my academic experiences at institutions such as Harvard and the University of Birmingham, I was responsible for the development of the undergraduate curriculum in Disaster Management at the School of Architecture and Design at BRAC University in 2022. Additionally, I collaborated on the development of the “Humanitarian Crisis Management” certificate course, which was a joint initiative between BRAC and BRAC University. The course was designed to enhance the skills of humanitarian workers who are responsible for responding to crises such as the Rohingya influx.

Ground-Level Work with National Impact

Beyond the classroom, my research has enabled me to assess grassroots realities and national policies. I collaborated with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) to create a national guidebook on the management of cascading and compound

Career Highlights

disaster risks. I have collaborated with the Department of Social Services to evaluate the effectiveness of mobile financial services in Smart Bangladesh and to improve the quality of service for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, my research team has investigated the health of salt belt labourers in Kutubdia and the resilience of women's livelihoods in Bhasan Char. These initiatives underscore the susceptibility of marginalized communities and suggest data-driven, inclusive solutions for their sustainable growth.



Photo: Author during a research visit

Global Exposure

I have been privileged to represent Bangladesh on international platforms, earning fellowships and scholarships from the Commonwealth, Fulbright, Erasmus+, and Swedish Civil Contingency Agency. These experiences have not only broadened my perspective but also improved my capacity to localize global solutions. I have been a member of the scientific committee at the International Conference on Building Resilience and have presented at conferences in Portugal, Thailand, Canada, and Singapore. I have participated in sessions in New York and Vienna, representing Bangladesh, as a negotiator in the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime, and have contributed to the development of international policies on digital security.

I was awarded the opportunity to participate in two substantial roles that significantly enhanced my comprehension of age-inclusive urban planning and humanitarian response during my time in the United States under the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship. As a Program Assistant at Boston's Commission on Affairs of the Elderly, I contributed to the development of an action-oriented work plan for the city's elderly population, focusing on improving accessibility, healthcare support, and social inclusion. As an intern at the American Red Cross, I supported volunteer coordination and response systems, demonstrating the importance of community-based volunteerism and structured coordination in disaster-prone settings.

Emergency Response and Volunteerism

I acquired the most knowledge through crisis service. I was on the ground during the Rana Plaza disaster and was acknowledged by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for my contributions to the search and rescue efforts. I have been involved in the coordination of relief efforts during the FR Tower tragedy, the Karail and Shat Tola slum fires, and, most recently, the Covid-19 lockdown. Simultaneously, I have composed numerous training modules for the Ministry of Disaster Management, such as manuals on emergency quarantine response, early warning systems, and water rescue. The national disaster preparedness arsenal now includes these modules.

Strengthening Youth Leadership Through Global Alumni Networks

I had the honour of serving as the President of the Access Alumni Society of Bangladesh (AASB) from April 2016 to October 2019, a platform that unites alumni of U.S. Department of State-funded programs under the U.S. Embassy Dhaka.

Community Development for Peace (CDP): A Platform for Grassroots Change

In 2013, I established Community Development for Peace (CDP), a voluntary organization that is led by young people and addresses a variety of issues, including adolescent radicalization, gender-based violence, trafficking, corruption, climate change, and digital literacy. A government-registered non-profit organization, CDP is dedicated to promoting sustainable development and peacebuilding in Bangladesh in compliance with UN guidelines. Founded in 2013 by former US state alumni, CDP is dedicated to tackling important issues like human trafficking, drugs and crime, extremism and radicalization, cybersecurity, young leadership, and humanitarian crisis management.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set forth by the United Nations, CDP works with a number of distinguished partners, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh, a number of High Commissions, the Bangladesh Police's Anti-Terrorism Unit, the National Security Intelligence's Counter Terrorism Wing, the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence's Counter Terrorism and Intelligence Bureau, and some other law enforcement organizations, academic institutions, and pertinent establishments. In order to address these important concerns, CDP promotes multi-stakeholder cooperation through research, lobbying, and capacity-building programs.

As evidence of its dedication to quality, CDP is the only civil society organization in Bangladesh that is accredited by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), an honour bestowed by agreement among its 193 member states. This

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acknowledgement highlights CDP's function as a reliable ally in promoting security and peace on a local and international scale. Going forward, CDP is committed to respecting UN principles and helping realize the organization's goal of a world that is more fair, just, and sustainable. Through collaboration, ingenuity, and community involvement, CDP aims to give objects purpose. Through more than 65 programs, CDP has had an impact on over 30,000 lives.

I started my journey by paying attention to the difficulties around me. These did not confine me; rather, they moulded my purpose. Along the process, I learned that success is more than simply academic achievements. I spent time developing practical skills such as communication, research tools, and teamwork. I sought feedback, refined my goals, and remained true to my narrative. Most importantly, I formed a group of mentors and peers who believed in me, and now I help others. I believe in providing actual tools to young people, such as research opportunities, digital skills training, proposal writing workshops, and access to worldwide platforms. I have actively worked with youth-led networks, organized climate education events, and provided one-on-one support to students seeking for overseas scholarships.

Muhammad Ferdaus is Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Postgraduate Programs in Disaster Management (PPDM) at BRAC University. He can be reached at muhammadferdaus2@gmail.com.

Journey of a Commonwealth Scholar towards becoming a Global Changemaker

Dr. Mohammad Abbas Uddin

I am honoured to share that I have been awarded the prestigious Global Change Award 2025 on 20 May, 2025 at the Old Bell, London, UK for my idea on the “Decarbonization Lab for Textile Process Innovation”. As a Commonwealth scholar, it is a proud moment to become the first-ever Bangladeshi recipient of this award, often referred to as the “Nobel Prize of the fashion industry” backed by the H&M Foundation to support bold, early-stage innovations with the potential to decarbonize fashion. This year’s campaign saw 476 ideas submitted from 69 countries across six continents, and each finalist was carefully vetted by the Expert Panel of the Global Change Award 2025.

As part of this recognition, I have joined a growing global network of pioneers through the year-long Changemaker Programme, designed to scale transformative ideas, grow impact, and shape the future of fashion. I met my fellow changemakers during Week 1 in London in April 2025, where we focused on personal growth and systems change. Week 2, scheduled for October 2025 in Stockholm, will emphasize industry readiness, continued learning, and culminate in an industry summit and the award ceremony. The final segment, Week 3, will take place in January 2026 in Vietnam, featuring visits to textile factories and production plants to provide real-world exposure to sustainability practices in the industry.

My project, the “Decarbonization Lab for Textile Process Innovation” is an early-stage R&D initiative focused on low-emission dyeing, finishing, and material treatment to disrupt outdated textile processes and establish sustainable production methods. Despite being in its early stages, the lab has already been prototyped under GIZ’s WaSaTex project, offering actionable training and concrete plans. Drawing on experiences from over 300 factories involved in the “Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production” projects, the lab is positioned as an emerging hub for peer-supported, industry-aligned innovation.

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My research shows that optimizing textile wet processes through this lab can reduce water consumption by 30–40%, leading to substantial cuts in energy use, dyes, chemicals, and Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) load—crucial for meaningful decarbonization. Through this initiative, I am critically examining the environmental impacts of energy-intensive and carbon-emitting dyeing and finishing processes that dominate the textile sector in South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh. With the majority of our RMG exports destined for Europe, reducing our carbon footprint is no longer a choice but a necessity. The lab focuses on aligning practices with Science-Based Targets (SBTs), rigorously monitoring decarbonization metrics to drive sustainable, low-carbon production.



Photo: with fellow winners of the Global Change Award 2025

It has been disheartening to witness how global fashion brands and buyers often overlook the local and regional environmental toll of textile production in the Global South, especially in Bangladesh. I have long been driven by the question: How can we minimize environmental impact without requiring major infrastructural investment? And equally important: How can we reduce resource wastage and transform waste into inputs for value-added products? These questions have defined my journey as a changemaker committed to economically and socio-ecologically sustainable industrial practices. Over the past 22 years, I have consistently addressed harmful industrial practices across the textile, environmental, and chemical sectors through regulatory work, policymaking, academic research, and project management along with academic publications.

The Commonwealth Scholarship (2009–10) was a turning point in my journey. It gave me the opportunity to pursue a PhD at the University of Manchester, where I gained critical technical and academic expertise, and also earned recognition as a Chartered

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Fellow of The Textile Institute UK (CText FTI). My earlier academic background includes an MBA from IBA, University of Dhaka, a Master's from Curtin University under the Australian Development Scholarship, and a Bachelor's in Textile Technology from the College of Textile Technology, University of Dhaka.

Since completing my PhD, I have contributed to over 150 national and global projects, leading teams in the development of more than 500 final reports, 20 publications, and 6 policy documents. I've worked extensively on policy, regulatory frameworks, baseline surveys, and training programmes, helping to upskill more than 5,000 industry professionals and students.

With the global recognition of the Global Change Award 2025, I am more committed than ever to bringing back meaningful benefits to Bangladesh by promoting sustainability and innovation in the textile sector. I look forward to the journey ahead with fellow global changemakers, as we reimagine the future of fashion, grounded in science, sustainability, and social responsibility.

Dr. Mohammad Abbas Uddin is Assistant Professor at the Department of Dyes and Chemical Engineering, BUTEX and Consultant at Reed Consultancy. He can be reached at abbas.shiyak@dce.butex.edu.bd.

Weaving a Life in Textile Education: My Journey in Academic Leadership

Dr. Engr. Ayub Nabi Khan

When I began my journey in textile technology over 35 years ago, I could not have imagined the transformative path it would take, from lecture halls in Dhaka to research labs in Manchester, and eventually to shaping national institutions and global partnerships. Today, as Acting Vice Chancellor of BUFT, I look back with gratitude, and forward with purpose.

My academic foundation began at the University of Dhaka with a B.Sc. in Textile Technology. From there, I was fortunate to pursue an M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Textile Technology at UMIST, University of Manchester, UK, an experience that not only deepened my expertise but also opened doors to international collaborations and lifelong learning.



Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of serving in key academic and administrative roles, Vice Chancellor (In-Charge), Pro-Vice Chancellor, Principal, Professor, across several institutions. Among my proudest contributions is helping to transform the National Institute of Textile Engineering and Research (NITER) into a nationally acclaimed institution. I've also had the honour of designing and launching Bangladesh's first B.Sc. in Textile Engineering and the country's first MBA in Apparel Merchandising, initiatives that have empowered thousands of students to join the global textile workforce.

Research has always been a cornerstone of my career. With over 70 publications in journals, conferences, and books, I've strived to blend scientific inquiry with real-world impact. My work in fibre recycling, textile sustainability, and educational innovation has earned recognition including the Holden Medal for Education (2018) from The

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Textile Institute, UK. I've secured over €170,000 in research grants and led joint projects with European partners. During the pandemic, I spearheaded BUFT's transition to online education, a first among private universities in Bangladesh, and one acknowledged by UGC-Bangladesh.

I've been blessed with opportunities to serve as a Ph.D. supervisor, external examiner, and visiting academic in over 20 countries, from the UK and Germany to Malaysia and Australia. My global exposure has been further shaped by awards and fellowships such as the Commonwealth Scholarship, Charles Wallace Fellowship, and Maclaren Cotton Industry Research Scholarship. Locally, I've received the Begum Rokeya Smrity Padak (2016) and Ekushe Smrity Padak (2017) for my contributions to education, and an Honorary Doctorate from DPRMI, Nigeria.

Yet, beyond titles and accolades, what drives me most is the impact I can make on institutions, on students, and on the future of textile education. I take immense pride in mentoring the next generation of professionals and advocating for a textile industry that's not only globally competitive but also socially and environmentally responsible.

It's this commitment that has shaped every step of my journey from designing courses and policies to representing Bangladesh on international platforms. I remain deeply humbled and motivated to continue weaving knowledge, leadership, and innovation into the fabric of our education system.

Professor Dr. Engr. Ayub Nabi Khan is Vice Chancellor (Acting) at the BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology (BUFT). He can be reached at khanayubnabi@yahoo.com.

Report on the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Summit: “Towards a Knowledge Hub”

Dr. Kishwar Jahan Sethi & Dr. Nadra Tabassum

The Bangladesh Association of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (BACSAF), with sponsorship from the British Council, organised the "Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Summit: Towards a Knowledge Hub" on December 7, 2024. The event marked the 65th anniversary of the Commonwealth Scholarships and celebrated its contributions to empowering global change leaders. The summit aimed to unite Commonwealth scholars and fellows in Bangladesh, communicate the scholarship's impact to society, and establish a Knowledge Hub under the leadership of BACSAF.



Welcome Address

The program commenced with a welcome address by Prof. Borhan Uddin Khan, President of BACSAF. He emphasised the historical collaboration between the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), the British Council, and Bangladesh since 1959. Prof. Khan highlighted the need to increase BACSAF membership, targeting 500 members by 2026 out of 1,900 scholarship recipients in the country. He stressed the pivotal role of BACSAF in raising awareness about Commonwealth Scholarships at the national level and uniting scholars to leverage their collective expertise for societal benefit.

British Council's Address

Following the welcome, Mr. Stephen Forbes, Country Director of the British Council in Bangladesh, delivered his address. He elaborated on the effort of British Council to foster education, equity, creativity, and leadership development in collaboration with the UK and Bangladesh. Mr. Forbes emphasised the necessity of utilising the skills and expertise of scholars to solve practical challenges in Bangladesh, ensuring that the knowledge gained abroad translates into meaningful contributions locally.

Keynote Speech by Professor Emeritus Dr. Ainun Nishat

The keynote speech was delivered by Professor Emeritus Dr. Ainun Nishat, a prominent expert in water resource management and climate change. As a Commonwealth scholar, Dr. Nishat highlighted three significant themes for maximizing the impact of Commonwealth Scholarships.

First, he underscored the importance of understanding the purpose behind the funding and support of CSC. Second, he called upon scholars to demonstrate their achievements both individually and collectively. Third, he stressed the need for providing constructive feedback to improve the scholarship programs further.

Dr. Nishat quoted his supervisor's advice: 'PhD is the beginning of research' and encouraged scholars to step out of their comfort zones to broaden their research horizons. He emphasised networking as a cornerstone for driving positive changes and urged scholars to foster collaborative learning between senior and junior fellows. He concluded by reaffirming that education is the best form of investment and highlighted the importance of adopting new techniques and approaches for mutual knowledge exchange.

Chief Guest Address by Her Excellency Sarah Cooke

Her Excellency Sarah Cooke, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, attended as the Chief Guest.



Photo: Her Excellency Sarah Cooke addressing the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Summit as the Chief Guest

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She commended the 65-year legacy of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, which has empowered leaders worldwide to make the planet more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient. She praised the remarkable contributions of over 1,900 Bangladeshi scholars in diverse sectors, including education, healthcare, governance, and climate action.

Her Excellency urged stronger collaboration between CSC and BACSAF to guide future generations with knowledge, integrity, and compassion. She emphasised the need to build on this legacy to address emerging national and global challenges.

Speech by Prof. M. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury

Prof. M. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, General Secretary of BACSAF, acknowledged CSC's role in transformative education. He expressed gratitude for the opportunities provided by the Commonwealth Scholarships, particularly for institutions like the University of Dhaka. He called for further expansion of CSC programs to meet the evolving global needs and challenges, ensuring a sustainable future.

Roundtable Discussion

The event featured an interactive Roundtable Discussion facilitated by Prof. Sangita Ahmed and Syed M. Istiak, with active participation from group leaders (Prof. Dr. M. Nahid Sattaer, Asikur Rhman, Rashed Hosen, Ushan Ara Badal, Rahsed Shorawadradi, Dr. M. Mahit Saf Husain, Roshan Arabadal, Professor Gausia Shafiq Rahman, Dr. Tanzil Rashid, and audience members). Discussions focused on strengthening CSC's advocacy and BACSAF's visibility at institutional and national levels. Scholars addressed two core questions:

1. How to strengthen CSC's involvement and advocacy within institutions/organizations?
2. How to raise awareness of Commonwealth Scholarships at the national level?

Key Recommendations from the Discussion

Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration

- Establish mentoring programs for scholars within Bangladesh and internationally.
- Facilitate subject-specific collaborations to encourage interdisciplinary research.
- Organise an Innovation Fair to showcase research and share knowledge.
- Develop potential collaboration on research, education and professional skills between public and private organizations.

Technology and Communication

- Develop a comprehensive BACSAF website with a dashboard to streamline communication and email updates.

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- Use social media platforms to improve BACSAF's national visibility and outreach.
- Strengthen social media activities to produce national visibility and impact.
- Regularly publish newsletters highlighting achievements of Scholars and Fellows to promote scholar's achievements via regular newsletter publication. BACSAF can prepare one or take the initiative to publish in the existing newsletters promoted by CSC.



Photo: Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows presenting highlights from the roundtable discussions during the Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows Summit

Outreach and Decentralisation

- Expand BACSAF programs beyond Dhaka to include regional outreach and better participation.
- Organise workshops and seminars addressing pressing national issues.
- Take the initiative to create platforms within each institution where Commonwealth scholars can connect and build a community based on their professional interests.

Scholar Support and Advocacy

- Enhance the fairness of CSC's selection process with direct involvement and oversight. The selection procedure needs to be fairer by direct involvement of CSC rather than involving any third party.
- Develop post-doctoral fellowships for early and mid-career scientists, especially women.
- Quantitative and qualitative increment of professional fellowships under CSC.
- Provide workshops and counselling for physical and mental well-being of scholars and fellows to promote a sense of self-awareness.
- Establish a life-long support platform for scholars and their families.

Policy Dialogues and Engagement

- Arrange policy dialogues with scholars and fellows on national issues to influence decision-making.
- Report national scholars' achievements to attract more funding and resources from CSC.
- Publication of proceedings on research findings and contributions of home-returned scholars.

Conclusion and Vote of Thanks

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Syed M. Istiak, Co-Organiser of the Summit. He expressed gratitude to the attendees, sponsors, and organising committee for their contributions to the success of program. He reminded the participants about the next Annual General Meeting scheduled for 24 May 2025 and encouraged continued active participation in the initiatives of BACSAF.

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