

Editor's Desk

The April 2024 issue of *Thinking Aloud* focuses on "COVID and post-COVID Challenges in Bangladesh". The first-page article titled "How did COVID and post-COVID challenges affect poverty, inequality, and food security in Bangladesh?" outlines the COVID and post-COVID challenges in Bangladesh. There is a growing need to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic challenges on poverty, inequality, employment, education, healthcare, and food security. The recently completed SANEM-GDI Household Survey 2023 sheds some important insights in this regard. In 2018, SANEM conducted a nationally representative survey covering 10,500 households across Bangladesh. Between October/November 2023, SANEM, in collaboration with the Global Development Institute (GDI) of the University of Manchester, conducted another round of surveys with the same sample successfully covering 9,065 households. Based on the survey findings, four key issues are noted in this article. First, the national upper poverty rate has fallen from 21.6% in 2018 to 20.7% in 2023. This fall in poverty is primarily driven by the fall in rural poverty from 24.5% to 21.6%. However, it is noteworthy that a rise in the urban poverty rate from 16.3% to 18.7% has been also observed. Second, a wide disparity in household consumption expenditure patterns between poor and non-poor households has been observed. The third most important factor is in the case of education. The prolonged closure of the institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a great level of learning loss. The final but the biggest challenge most households in Bangladesh faced in the post-pandemic era was the high inflation rate. The second and third pages of this issue present the summary of Summary Findings from the SANEM-GDI Study on "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Challenges on the Poverty Dynamics in Bangladesh". The study recommended several key policies after sharing the findings. The fourth page showcases the events in March 2024.

Inside this issue

How did COVID and post-COVID challenges affect poverty, inequality, and food security in Bangladesh?

Summary Findings from the SANEM-GDI Study on "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Post-pandemic Challenges on the Poverty Dynamics in Bangladesh"

SANEM events

Editor:

Selim Raihan

Associate Editor:

Eshrat Sharmin

Coordinator:

Sk. Ashibur Rahman

How did COVID and post-COVID challenges affect poverty, inequality, and food security in Bangladesh?

Selim Raihan and Mahtab Uddin

Bangladesh has made significant strides in several socioeconomic development indicators over the last thirty years. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, like in the rest of the world, has caused disruptions to the country's development trajectory. Additionally, after the pandemic, the inflationary pressure resulting from the Russia-Ukraine war has further complicated Bangladesh's development dynamics, particularly in the context of poverty reduction, inequality, and food security. In this conjecture, it is important to gauge how the COVID and the post-COVID challenges have affected these parameters. The recently completed SANEM-GDI Household Survey 2023 sheds some important insights in this regard.

In 2018, SANEM conducted a nationally representative survey covering 10,500 households across Bangladesh. Between October/November 2023, SANEM, in collaboration with the Global Development Institute (GDI) of the University of Manchester, conducted another round of surveys with the same sample successfully covering 9,065 households. Based on the survey findings, four key issues are noted.

First, we observe that the national upper poverty rate has fallen from 21.6% in 2018 to 20.7% in 2023. This fall in poverty is primarily driven by the fall in rural poverty from 24.5% to 21.6%. However, we observe a rise in the urban poverty rate from 16.3% to 18.7%.

Given the depth of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the income-based poverty approach might not capture a holistic picture. In this regard, we estimate the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The MPI is constructed based on three indicators – (i) education, (ii) health, and (iii) standard of living. Bangladesh's MPI headcount poverty rate has fallen from 25.8% in 2018 to 24.7% in 2023. The rural MPI poverty rate has fallen from 30.4% to 27.6%. However, the MPI poverty rate has increased in the urban areas from 16.8% to 18%.

Why has poverty in urban areas increased? Two possible explanations could be - (i) urban areas constitute a large proportion of the vulnerable poor who migrated to the cities out of poverty or due to climate shock, etc. Significant shocks, such as the recent price hike, would make these vulnerable people fall below the poverty line. And (ii) the existing social security programmes do not cover urban areas extensively – making many urban households more vulnerable to shocks.

Second, we observe a wide disparity in household consumption expenditure patterns between poor and non-poor households. In the face of the post-pandemic inflationary pressure, poor households have reduced their spending on food and non-food consumption expenditure. However, the richer households have increased their spending significantly. Such disparity signals a rising inequality in the country. As observed, the share of income of the top 5% of the households compared to the bottom 20% has increased by more than twofold between 2018 and 2023. Of course, our survey does not include ultra-rich households and, therefore, can be considered a conservative estimate. Nonetheless, the estimate

shows a grim picture of growing inequality in the country.

The third most important factor we observe is in the case of education. The prolonged closure of the institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a great level of learning loss. The opportunity to participate in online education/distance learning was limited during the pandemic. Only 33% of urban and 21% of rural households had such access. In the post-pandemic scenario, we see that 15% of the school-going-aged children (aged 5-15) are not attending schools in 2023. This is a 2-percentage point rise compared to 2018. Moreover, this rate has increased among the poorest income households while decreasing in the richest income cohort. As such, almost one-quarter of the children from the poorest 20% of households are not attending school, compared to only 9% of the children from the richest 20% of households.

The final but the biggest challenge most households in Bangladesh faced in the post-pandemic era was the high inflation rate. To cope with the crisis, households resorted to changing dietary patterns, increased borrowing, depleting savings/assets, cutting down non-food expenditures, etc. We find that the households' food insecurity, as measured with the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), has worsened between April 2023 and October/November 2023. The food security of the poorer households worsened more than the non-poor households. In October/November 2023, nearly 22% of all households were moderately food-insecure, and 3% were severely food-insecure. Among the poor households, 30% were moderately food insecure in October/November 2023 (a rise of five percentage points compared to April 2023), and 7% were severely food insecure (a rise of three percentage points). In all cases, we observe more severe food insecurity in urban areas than in rural areas.

These findings warrant urgent policy directives. In the face of rising urban poverty and food insecurity, there is no alternative to widening the existing social security programmes in the urban areas. At the same time, programmes like open market sales (OMS) or food-friendly programmes need to be further expanded. Moreover, the education ministry must undertake an action plan to address the concerns of the increased proportion of children outside education/drop-out rates and recoup the learning loss impeded during the pandemic. Finally, the government should explore more options for reducing the inflationary prices in the country. Increased monitoring of the market cannot alone surf through this crisis. This must be combined with supply-side policies, such as liberalising the import tariff for some essential food products, at least temporarily. Bangladesh is one of the most protected countries in the world, with high import tariffs and supplementary duties on almost all food products. In addition, there should be synonymous monetary and fiscal policies to mop up the inflationary pressure in the economy.

Dr Selim Raihan (selim.raihan@gmail.com) is a Professor of Economics at the University of Dhaka and Executive Director of SANEM.

Mahtab Uddin (Mahtab.ud@gmail.com) is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Dhaka and a Commonwealth PhD Scholar at the University of Manchester, the UK.

Summary Findings from the SANEM-GDI Study on “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Post-pandemic Challenges on the Poverty Dynamics in Bangladesh”

David Fielding, Selim Raihan, Katsushi Imai, Upasak Das, and Mahtab Uddin

Bangladesh has witnessed remarkable economic growth and development in the last three decades. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the Russia-Ukraine war and the global energy crisis, has put Bangladesh to the test on several frontiers. There is a growing need to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic challenges on poverty, inequality, employment, education, healthcare, and food security in Bangladesh. This study aims to provide insights into these parameters based on a nationally representative household survey.

The 2023 survey is built on the SANEM-GED household survey convened in 2018 across Bangladesh with 10,500 households from 500 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). The survey was conducted during October/November 2023.

Among the 10,500 households, the survey team was able to reach 8,765 households. Including split households, the total number of households covered in this round was 9,065. The 2023 survey questionnaire included questions pertinent to households' basic characteristics, education, employment, assets, COVID-19-led major challenges and coping strategies, social protection, health, vaccination scenario of coronavirus vaccine, migration, and remittances, along with pre-COVID, during-COVID and post COVID household income and expenditure information.

Moreover, the questionnaire included a separate section to capture the ongoing inflationary pressure, food insecurity and household coping strategies.

In this study, poverty is measured following two approaches: conventional consumption expenditure-based poverty and multidimensional poverty based on (i) education and (ii) health and (iii) standard of living indicators. The poverty line for the consumption expenditure-based approach is measured following the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method for each of the 20 strata (eight rural, eight urban, and four metropolitan areas). Using the upper poverty line, the incidence of poverty is estimated at 20.7% at the national level, 21.6% in rural areas, and 18.7% in urban areas (Figure 1). Using the lower poverty line, the incidence of extreme poverty is estimated at 7.9% at the national level, 8.9% in rural areas, and 5.4% in urban areas (Figure 2). At the divisional level, the highest poverty rate was estimated in Rangpur

and Barisal, 42.9% and 32.5%, respectively. Notably, while the rural poverty in Bangladesh has decreased from 24.5% in 2018 to 21.6% in 2023, the urban poverty rate has increased from 16.3% to 18.7%.

A similar trend is observed in multidimensional poverty (Figure 3). The rural multidimensional poverty rate has fallen from 30.4% to 27.6%, while in the urban area, it has increased from 16.8% in 2018 to 18.0% in 2023. The reasons behind the rise in urban poverty, both in terms of the CBN poverty line and the multidimensional approach, are twofold. (i) Urban areas constitute a large proportion of the vulnerable poor who migrated to the cities out of poverty or due to climate shock, etc. Significant shocks, such as the recent price hike, would make these vulnerable people fall below the poverty line. And (ii) the existing social security programmes do not cover urban areas extensively – making many urban households more vulnerable to shocks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the educational sector, leading to great learning loss due to the education institutions' prolonged closure. On average, the schools in Bangladesh

(5-15) are not attending schools in 2023. This is a 2-percentage point rise compared to 2018. Moreover, this rate has increased among the poorest income households while decreasing in the richest income cohort. As such, almost one-quarter of the children from the poorest 20% of households are not attending school, compared to only 9% of the children from the richest 20% of households.

Regarding healthcare, we observe that only 8.5% of the surveyed population suffered from COVID-19-like symptoms between March 2020 and October/November 2023, while less than one quarter undertook the test. Nevertheless, one of Bangladesh's successes in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic was rolling out the vaccine on time. Bangladesh started administering the COVID-19 vaccines on 27 January 2021. As can be observed, 77% of the males and 80% of the females (aged five years or more) received more than two doses of the vaccine. Another important aspect to note is that there is no difference in the distribution of vaccine rates between rural and urban areas.

One consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare could be a large rise in per capita health expenditure between 2018 and 2023 (Figure 6). Compared to 2018, the average per capita health expenditure increased by more than threefold in 2023 to BDT 1,704 per month. However, the rise is not symmetrical across all income groups. The rise was just twofold for the poorest 20% of the households, while for the richest 20% of the households, the rise was sixfold.

Most of the employment at the national level comes from the services sector (47%), followed by agriculture (36%) and industry (18%). The concentration of agricultural employment is more prominent in rural areas than in urban areas and among women than men.

When compared to 2018, the overall unemployment rate in Bangladesh slightly increased from 3.2 per cent to 4 per cent in 2023, primarily due to the rise in the male unemployment rate twofold in both rural and urban areas. A similar trend is observed for the youth male unemployment rate, which has increased from 5.4% in 2018 to 11.6% in 2023.

Between March 2020 and December 2020, in the rural setting, almost all males (96.8 per cent) and most of the females (93.2 per cent) experienced a decrease in salary. A similar situation was observed in the urban counterparts. In April–June 2020, the income was at the lowest for both genders and areas. Among all the divisions, the Rangpur division had the lowest average income in the month of lowest-earning in both the rural and urban settings. Moreover, the average income of rural areas was higher in Barisal, Chittagong and

Figure 1: Upper Poverty Rates by Region

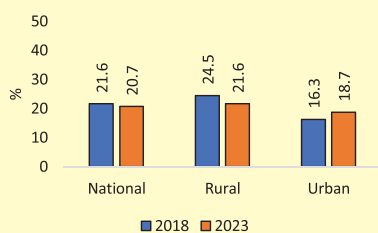


Figure 2: Lower Poverty Rates by Region

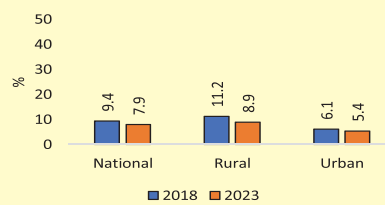


Figure 3: Multidimensional poverty by rural and urban location in 2018 and 2023

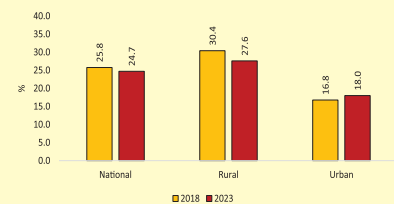
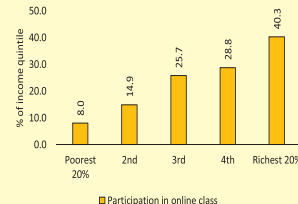


Figure 4: Participation in online/TV classes (%) during the pandemic by income quintile



were closed for more than 450 days. During this time, online learning programmes were launched to keep students engaged, as conventional instructions in class were not feasible. However, neither all educational institutes nor all students were able to participate. This study finds that only 20% of the rural and 33% of the urban schools had distance learning programmes. Moreover, participation in the online classes differed widely among households from different income quintiles (Figure 4). Only 8% of the poorest income households participated in online/ distance learning programmes compared to 40.3% in the richest quintile households. Reasons accounted for not participating in online/TV classes include- (i) a lack of classes or distance learning activities, (ii) unavailability of a device such as a phone or television, (iii) a lack of internet access, (iv) slow internet connectivity, (v) cost of internet, (vi) being not accustomed to technology, etc.

In the post-pandemic scenario, this study finds that 15% of the school-going-aged children (aged

Rajshahi divisions than urban ones. Regarding self-employed (non-agriculture enterprise), the rural counterparts of the Sylhet division remained closed for the longest period during the pandemic. In the rural areas of Barishal and Sylhet division and the urban settings of Rangpur, no businesses were closed for more than six months. Around 19.3 per cent of the urban businesses of the Dhaka division remained closed for more than six months. For the self-employed (non-agriculture non-enterprise), in the rural setting, around 70.1% reported that they had to close business during the pandemic, whereas the percentage was 73.9 in the urban counterparts of the Barishal division. Rangpur division had a notable difference in the closure period in the rural (70%) and urban counterparts (57.1%).

In terms of the impact of the pandemic on wage employment, this study finds that 54% of the males and 44% of the females lost their jobs during the pandemic. Most of these workers remained unemployed for longer than 3-4 months. Almost all these workers faced some cutdown in their wages. More than three-quarters of self-employed workers in the non-farm sector reported business closures during the pandemic. More than half of them had to close the business for a period of 1-3 months. In the case of agriculture, livestock, poultry or fisheries, the households faced challenges related to high input prices, low prices of the produced, shortage of labour, transportation problems, etc., during the pandemic.

This study also observed the impact of the pandemic on migrant households. Since the beginning of the pandemic, many international migrant workers had to return to Bangladesh permanently. As a proportion of the migrant worker stock in 2018, nationally, more than 9% of the international migrant households had a permanent returnee migrant worker during the survey in 2023. At the divisional level, the highest proportion of these returnee migrants (as % of all migrant stock at the divisional level in 2018) is in Mymensingh (20%), Chittagong (11.2%), and Dhaka (10.2%). The major reasons behind these returnee migrants include losing jobs during the pandemic (33%), contractual issues (20%), disputes with the employer (14.7%), false/visa or victim of fraud (4%), amongst others. Moreover, among these permanent returnee migrant workers, nearly one-third remained unemployed at the time of the survey in October/November 2023. Given the high cost of migration and the households' financing strategies for international migration, this phenomenon of returnee migrant workers has important policy implications.

The major shock experienced by the households in both rural and urban areas during October 2022-September 2023 period was the unusually high price level of the essential commodities (78% in the rural and 76% in the urban). Apart from inflationary pressure, other shocks included high prices of agricultural inputs, crop/livestock diseases, reduction in the earnings of the household member, floods, low prices of crops, illnesses of the earning member, etc. In response to the recent shocks, the primary coping strategy undertaken by the households was changing their dietary patterns involuntarily (59%), followed by depleted savings (45%), obtaining credits (40%), unconditional help from friends or relatives (33%), reduced expenditure on health and education (8%), etc. In addition, in rural areas, households sold animal stock (11%), or changed cropping practices (7%). The proportion of households receiving support from the local governments was around 5% in rural and urban areas. This study placed particular attention on the impact of the recent inflationary pressure on households. As observed, between April 2023 and October/November 2023, 70% of households reported that their household expenditure had increased. In addition to the price hike, the incomes of a large

Between April and October/November 2023, the food insecurity experience scale (FIES) has worsened for poor and non-poor households across all regions. Among poor households, moderate food insecurity has increased by five percentage points (from 25% in Apr'23 to 30% in Oct/Nov'23), while severe food insecurity has increased by three percentage points (from 4% to 7% of the poor population) (Figure 7 and 8). Poor from the urban areas are more food insecure than rural: 29% of the rural poor households and 32% of the urban poor households were categorized as moderately food insecure in October/November 2023. In both rural and urban areas, severe food insecurity was found to be 7% among poor households. Based on the survey findings, this study recommends five key policies. First, the government needs to roll out social security programmes across the nation as stipulated in the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). Particular attention must be given to the urban poor and new poor households. Second, there should be more budgetary allocation and specific policies for the education sector to address the issue of children missing in education, reduce school dropout rates, and recoup the learning loss impeded during the pandemic. Third, it is high time the government emphasises increasing the tax net and restructuring the existing tax frame. This is because increasing budgetary allocations for the education and social security programmes would require a larger fiscal space. Fourth, the government needs to undertake more active labour market policies to reduce the unemployment rate among men, youth, and permanent returnee migrant workers. And lastly, the government must undertake alternative and complementary policies to reduce the inflationary pressures on households. This should include, more increased monitoring of the market, as well as liberalising the import tariff on many of the staple foods in Bangladesh. An increased supply of essential foods (such as dairy, meat, fruits, etc.) would help Bangladesh to tame down the price level. This should be complemented with supporting fiscal and monetary policies.

David Fielding is a Professor of Development Economics at the GDI, University of Manchester

Selim Raihan is a Professor of Economics at the University of Dhaka and Executive Director of SANEM

Katsushi Imai is a Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester

Upasak Das is a Presidential Research Fellow at the GDI, University of Manchester

Mahtab Uddin is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Dhaka and a Commonwealth PhD scholar at the University of Manchester.

Figure 5: Children outside education by income quantile in 2018 and 2023 (% of school-aged children 5-15)

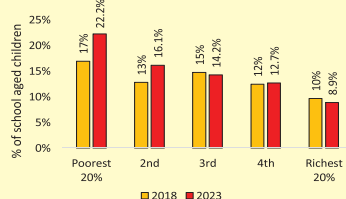


Figure 7: Severity of food insecurity - National (% of all households)

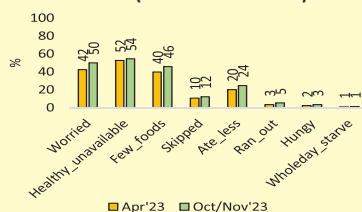


Figure 6: Average per capita health expenditure in 2018 & 2023 by income quantile (in BDT)

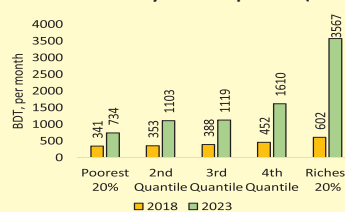
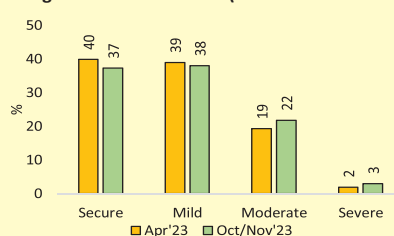


Figure 8: FIES - National (% of all households)



Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha presented research findings at international conference

The International Conference on Financial Inclusion in Bangladesh: Gender Perspectives, held on March 9, 2024, at the Ruposhi Bangla Grand Ballroom, InterContinental Dhaka, was attended by esteemed individuals from various sectors. The event commenced with welcoming remarks from Dr Ayesha Banu, Professor at the Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Dhaka, followed by special guests Ms Nurun Nahar, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank, and Ms Hillary Miller-Wise, Deputy Director at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Chief Guest, Dr Atiur Rahman, Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank, graced the occasion with his presence. The conference featured sessions discussing the gender gap in financial inclusion in Bangladesh, with notable speakers including Dr Md. Mokhlesur Rahman, Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, and Dr Lila Rashid.

SANEM Impact Assessment Centre organised a workshop on SAM

The SANEM Impact Assessment Centre successfully organised the workshop "The ABCs of Social Accounting Matrix (SAM): An Introductory Guide-Episode 1" on March 9, 2024, attracting 150 students from 14 countries. The workshop, led by Dr Bazlul Haque Khondker, Former Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Chairman of SANEM, provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) construction and its practical applications. SANEM Impact Assessment Centre looks forward to organising similar workshops to continue contributing to the field's development.

SANEM SDG Centre organised a Talk on Labor Market and SDG Alignment in South Asia

The SDG Centre of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) hosted a thought-provoking talk titled "Assessing the Labour Market from the Perspective of the SDGs: Overview and Some Illustration from South Asia" on March 14, 2024. Attended by 70 participants, including students, professionals, and policymakers including Former State Minister of Planning Dr Shamsul Alam; the talk featured Dr Iyanatul Islam, Professor (Adjunct) at Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, Australia, and Former Branch Chief at ILO Geneva, as the keynote speaker. Overall, the event provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange, highlighting the crucial role of research and collaboration in advancing sustainable development efforts in South Asia.

SANEM and UN Women hosted validation workshop in Dhaka

The validation workshop titled "Women's Participation in the Construction Sector and STEM-based Careers in Bangladesh: Sharing of Study Findings and Validation Workshop," jointly organised by UN Women and the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), successfully took place on March 31, 2024 in Dhaka. Chaired by Dr Selim Raihan, Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Executive Director of SANEM, the event featured a presentation by Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Research Director at SANEM. With participation from policymakers, government officials, academics, experts from NGOs and international organizations, young activists, journalists, and staff from UN Women and SANEM, the event facilitated constructive discussions and feedback on the study's findings, methodology, and recommendations.

Dr Selim Raihan presented at the LDC Future Forum

Dr Selim Raihan, Executive Director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), participated in the LDC Future Forum: Innovation for Structural Transformation in LDCs held from March 5 to 7, 2024, in Helsinki, Finland. Invited to present on the challenges of export diversification and structural transformation in Bangladesh, Dr Raihan's attendance underscored SANEM's commitment to advancing economic development strategies in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The forum, co-organised by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) and Finland, aimed to explore practical solutions for harnessing science, technology, and innovation to achieve sustainable development in LDCs.

Dr Selim Raihan was a panellist in the BFTI Seminar

Dr Selim Raihan, Executive Director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), spoke in the seminar titled "Reducing Bangladesh's Trade Deficit with Selected Countries: Role of Public Institutions," held on March 28, 2024, at the BFTI Academic Block in Dhaka. The seminar, organised by the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute (BFTI), featured discussions led by prominent figures in the field, including Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), and Dr Ahsan H. Mansur, Executive Director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, among others.

e-version: <http://sanemnet.org/thinking-aloud/>

Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha presented in the event on gender budget

The virtual parallel event titled "Financing for Gender Equality: Gender Budget," organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) during the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) Forum, took place on March 14, 2024. The event featured prominent speakers, including Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Professor at the University of Dhaka and Research Director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), who presented the keynote paper. Other speakers included Selima Ahmad, President of Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Nazneen Ahmed, Policy Advisor at the United Nations Development Programme in New York; Prof. Dr Hosne-Ara Begum, founder of Thengamara Mahila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS); Dr Selim Raihan, Executive Director of SANEM; and Towfiqul Islam Khan, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Policy Dialogue of Bangladesh. The welcome speech was delivered by Maleka Banu, General Secretary of BMP, while Dr Fauzia Moslem, President of BMP, moderated the session.

SANEM International Trade Centre convened the "Trade Winds" symposium

The SANEM International Trade Centre successfully convened the inaugural episode of the "Trade Winds" symposium series on March 30, 2024. Dr Prabir De, Professor at RIS, New Delhi, provided key insights into the evolving triangular cooperation among Bangladesh, India, and Japan, spanning cultural, economic, and strategic dimensions. Participants, including students and professionals, discussed regional initiatives like BBIN and BIMSTEC, highlighting the potential for enhanced connectivity and investment in Northeast India. The SANEM International Trade Centre looks forward to hosting further symposiums to advance global trade and economic development discourse.

Dr Selim Raihan spoke in the CSEP's conference

Dr Selim Raihan, Executive Director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), was a panellist at the second annual conference organised by the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) from March 1-3, 2024, in Rajasthan, India. The conference, themed "New Industrial Policies: Asian Perspectives," aimed to deepen India's engagement with Asia by facilitating connections among individuals and institutions across the region. Dr Raihan's presence alongside distinguished figures like Dr Rakesh Mohan, President Emeritus of CSEP, underscored SANEM's commitment to fostering regional collaboration and advancing economic development initiatives in South Asia.