Bay of Bengal Economic Dialogue 2021
“Post-COVID-19 Challenges in the Bay of Bengal Region”

8-11 February 2021

Live on Zoom, Facebook and YouTube

All time mentioned in Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT+6)

Day I: 8 February 2021

05:30 PM – 06:15 PM WELCOME SESSION

Dr Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka and Executive Director, SANEM, Bangladesh

Mr Achyut Bhandari, Co-founder, Centre for Research on Bhutanese Society (CRBS), Bhutan

Dr Prabir De, Professor, ASEAN-India Centre (AIC), Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi

Dr Puspa Sharma, Executive Director, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal

Ambassador Sumith Nakandala, Distinguished Fellow, Pathfinder Foundation, and Former Secretary General, BIMSTEC, Sri Lanka

Dr Surat Horachaikul, Director, Indian Studies Center, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

06:30 PM – 08:00 PM INAUGURAL SESSION

Chief Guest

H.E. Dr A. K. Abdul Momen, MP, Hon’ble Foreign Minister, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Special Guest

H.E. Mr Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary General of BIMSTEC

Moderator

Dr Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka and Executive Director, SANEM, Bangladesh

Remarks by

Ambassador Chutintorn Sam Gongsakdi, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Multilateral Cooperation), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India

Mr Tirtha Raj Wagle, Joint Secretary and Head, Regional Organization Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal

Amb. Bernard Goonetilleke, Chairman, Pathfinder Foundation, Sri Lanka

Dr Kinlay Dorjee, Senior Agriculture & Development Economist, Bhutan
Day II: 9 February 2021

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM  KEYNOTE SESSION

Keynote Speaker:  **Professor Rehman Sobhan**, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh

Chair:  **Ambassador Sumith Nakandala**, Distinguished Fellow, Pathfinder Foundation, and Former Secretary General, BIMSTEC

Remarks by  **Dr Suthiphand Chirathivat**, Professor Emeritus, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

**Dr Posh Raj Pandey**, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal

**Dr Nitya Nanda**, Director, Council for Social Development (CSD), India

02:30 PM – 04:00 PM  ORGANIZED SESSION: DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND E-COMMERCE

Chair:  **Dr Posh Raj Pandey**, Chairman, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal

Panellists:  **Ms Maliha M Quadir**, Founder and Managing Director, Shohoz Limited, Bangladesh

**Ms Deepali Gotadke**, Founder and Business Owner, Web Dreams, Hubli, Karnataka, India

**Mr Kshitiz Dahal**, Research Officer, SAWTEE, Nepal

**Ms Hang Tran**, Senior Coordinator, Enhanced Integrated Framework

Q&A

04:30 PM – 06:00 PM  ORGANIZED SESSION: TRADE AND REGIONAL VALUE CHAINS

Chair:  **Dr Ganeshan Wignaraja**, Adjunct Senior Fellow, RIS; Senior Visiting Fellow, Pathfinder Foundation and Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Institute of South Asian Studies, NUS, Singapore

Special Remarks:  **Mr Tadateru Hayashi**, OIC and Unit Head, SASEC, Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division, South Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Manila

Panellists:  **Dr Rajan Ratna**, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP, New Delhi

**Dr Fahmida Khatun**, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka
Dr Saikat Sinha Roy, Professor, Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Ms Subhashini Abeysinghe, Research Director, Verité Research, Colombo

Mr Afaq Hussain, Director, Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF), Delhi

Q&A

06:30 PM – 07:30 PM  PAPER PRESENTATION (TRADE)

Chair: Prof. S K Mohanty, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi

06:30 PM – 07:00 PM  Paper presentation

- “Assessing participation of BIMSTEC countries in global and regional value chains”, Dr Mia Mikic, Former Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the UNESCAP, Thailand; Ms Luna Ge LAI, PhD Candidate, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
- "Role of intraregional trade openness on fostering SDGs in BIMSTEC countries at Post-COVID period", Ms Shamima Sharmin, Joint Director, Financial Stability Department, Bangladesh Bank; Dr Kazi Arif Uz Zaman, Joint Director, Financial Stability Department, Bangladesh Bank
- "Integration of small and medium enterprises in BIMSTEC regional value chain for sustainable post Covid recovery", Mr Nishant Khanal, Master’s Student, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore; Mr Padam Raj Paneru, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

07:00 PM – 07:10 PM  Discussant: Dr M. A. Razzaque, Research Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI), Dhaka

07:10 PM – 07:30 PM  Open discussion and remarks by the Chair

07:30 PM – 08:30 PM  PAPER PRESENTATION (REGIONAL COOPERATION)

Chair: Dr Ravi Ratnayake, Former Director of Trade and Investment Division of the UNESCAP, Bangkok

07:30 PM – 08:00 PM  Paper presentation

- "Bay of Bengal Forum to accomplish regional cooperation", Dr Y. Yagama Reddy, Emeritus Professor, Centre for Southeast Asian & Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateswara University, India
- "Strategic public investment in agriculture for sustainable development in South Asia", Dr Swati Jain, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Allahabad, India
- "Trends and the way forward post Covid-19 in food security by the BIMSTEC nations", Ms. Swati Verma, Symbiosis International University, India; Ms Aratrika Deb, Symbiosis International University, India

08:00 PM – 08:10 PM  Discussant: Dr Paras Kharel, Research Director, SAWTEE, Nepal

08:10 PM – 08:30 PM  Open discussion and remarks by the Chair
Day III: 10 February 2021

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  PAPER PRESENTATION (HEALTH AND EDUCATION)

Chair: Dr Mia Mikic, Former Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the UNESCAP, Bangkok

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM  Paper presentation

- "Need for cooperation in public health in BIMSTEC", Ms Banantika Datta, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, India
- "Students’ perception of e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic: A Study Based on Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka", Ms R.M.M. Mayoshi, PhD Candidate, Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania and Professor A.S.P. Abhayaratne, Department of Economics and Statistics, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- "Impact of COVID-19 on education sector: Bangladesh perspective", Ms Sonamoni Karmaker, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB); Ms Najeefa Kabir, Student, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB)

11:30 AM – 11:40 AM  Discusssant: Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, and Research Director, SANEM

11:40 AM – 12:00 PM  Open discussion and remarks by the Chair

12:00 PM – 01:00 PM  PAPER PRESENTATION (EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES)

Chair: Dr Arup Mitra, Professor of Economics, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi

12:00 PM – 12:30 PM  Paper presentation

- "Effects of COVID-19 on the rural non-farm self-employed in India: does skill make a difference?" Dr Indrajit Bairagya, Assistant Professor, Centre for Human Resource Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, India
- "Prospects and challenges of skilling amidst the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic: A case of Indian labour market", Dr Mitali Gupta, Assistant Professor (Economics), Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), New Delhi, India; Dr Manik Kumar, Policy Analyst, Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), India
- “Covid-19 and its impact on the sectoral employment in India”, Dr Akhilesh K. Sharma, Assistant Professor, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, India; Dr Sushil K. Rai, Associate Professor, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, India

12:30 PM – 12:40 PM  Discusssant: Dr Sher Verick, Head of Employment Strategies Unit, International Labour Organization (ILO)

12:40 PM – 01:00 PM  Open discussion and remarks by the Chair
02:30 PM – 04:00 PM  ORGANIZED SESSION: REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY IN BAY OF BENGAL REGION

Chair  
Dr Ajitava Raychaudhuri, Professor, Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Special Remarks  
Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka

Panellists  
Mr So Umezaki, Director, IDE-JETRO, Japan
Dr Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, Senior Fellow, Neighbourhood Initiative, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Kolkata
Mr Achyut Bhandari, Co-founder, Centre for Research on Bhutanese Society (CRBS), Bhutan
Dr Ruth Banomyong, Associate Professor and Dean, Thammasat Business School, Thammasat University, Bangkok
Mr Rabi Shankar Sainju, Former Joint Secretary, Government of Nepal; and Consultant, ADB Nepal Office, Kathmandu

Q&A

04:30 PM – 06:00 PM  ORGANIZED SESSION: INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES FOR POST COVID RECOVERY

Chair  
Dr Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka and Executive Director, SANEM, Bangladesh

Presenter  
Dr Kazi Maruful Islam, Professor, Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Panellists  
Dr Dilli Raj Khanal, Former Member, National Planning Commission, Nepal
Dr Sabyasachi Kar, RBI Chair Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), India
Professor Ajitha Tennakoon, University of Kelaniya, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Dr Arpita Mukherjee, Professor, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), India
Dr Nopphol Witvorapong, Associate Professor, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Q&A
Organised Session: Deepening Health Sector Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal Region

Chair: Dr Ali Mehdi, Senior Visiting Fellow, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi

Special Remarks

Prof. T C James, Distinguished Fellow, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi

Dr Mushtaque Chowdhury, Convener, Bangladesh Health Watch; Professor of Clinical Population and Family Health, Columbia University Maliman School of Public Health

Panellists:

Dr Karma Lhazeeen, Director, Department of Public Health, Bhutan

Dr Rumana Huque, Professor Department of Economics, University of Dhaka

Dr Reji K. Joseph, Associate Professor, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), New Delhi

Dr Sameer M Dixit, Co-Founder & Director of Research, Center for Molecular Dynamics Nepal (CMDN), Nepal

Dr Thushani Dabrera, Consultant Community Physician, Regional Directorate of Health Services, Puttalam District, Sri Lanka

Q&A

Day IV: 11 February 2021

Paper Presentation (Cross-Cutting Issues)

Chair: Dr Ahsan H. Mansur, Executive Director, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI), Dhaka

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM

- "Trends in the inflow of foreign direct investment in India", Ms Aratrika Deb, Student, Symbiosis International University, India; Ms Swati Verma, Student, Symbiosis International University, India
- "Determinants of current account performance of selected South Asian economies: an application of PMG-ARDL model", Dr Hrushikesh Mallick, Associate Professor, Centre for Development Studies (CDS), India
- "Recreational and conservation valuation of Sundarbans mangrove forest in Bangladesh: approach of contingent valuation", Dr Md. Hafiz Iqbal, Assistant Professor of Economics, Government Edward College, Pabna, Bangladesh; Dr Md. Elias Hossain, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh
11:30 AM – 11:40 AM Discussant: **Dr Monzur Hossain**, Research Director, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Dhaka

11:40 AM – 12:00 PM Open discussion and remarks by the Chair

### ORGANIZED SESSION: TACKLING POST-COVID CHALLENGES IN THE BAY OF BENGAL REGION

**Chair**

**Dr Nagesh Kumar**, Director and Head, South and South-West Asia Office, UNESCAP, New Delhi

**Special Remarks**

**Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya**, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka

**Panellists**

**Dr Amitendu Palit**, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead (Trade and Economics), Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore

**Dr Amita Batra**, Professor of Economics, Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi

**Dr Dushni Weerakoon**, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS), Colombo

**Dr Shankaran Nambiar**, Senior Fellow, Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER), Kuala Lumpur

**Professor Sanjeev Mehta**, Head of Faculty of Social Sciences, Royal Thimphu College, Thimphu

Q&A

### ORGANISED SESSION: STRENGTHENING PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACTS

**Chair**

**Prof. Surat Horachaikul**, Director, Indian Studies Center, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

**Special Remarks:**

**Amb. Rajiv Bhatia**, Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House, Mumbai

**Panelists:**

**Mr Sabyasachi Dutta**, Executive Director, Asian Confluence, Shillong

**Dr Sreeradha Datta**, Centre Head & Senior Fellow, Neighbourhood Studies, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi

**Ms Nobonita Chowdhury**, Director, Gender, Justice & Diversity (GJD), and Preventing Violence Against Women Initiative, BRAC, Dhaka
Mr Manoj Das, Assistant Professor, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Gauhati University, Guwahati

Q&A

06:30 PM – 07:30 PM CLOSING SESSION

Release of Summary of Dialogue

Remarks by

Dr Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka and Executive Director, SANEM, Bangladesh

Mr Achyut Bhandari, Co-founder, Centre for Research on Bhutanese Society (CRBS), Bhutan

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