

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



SANEM ROUNDUP

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SANEM
RESEARCH | KNOWLEDGE | DEVELOPMENT

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In January,

SANEM began its nineteenth year with focused research and policy engagement. Analyses addressed economic fragility, labour reform, and urban poverty, while studies on energy transition, wind and solar technologies, and ESG in the RMG sector advanced evidence-based solutions. Key events included the TARA Climate Foundation workshop, the 7th Brown Bag Seminar on investment diversification, and an ESG Expert Group Meeting. The 2026 calendar, “Faces of Progress: Women Driving Bangladesh Forward,” highlighted women shaping Bangladesh’s socio-economic and technological landscape.

SANEM Spotlight



Thinking Aloud

Volume XII, Issue 9: February 1, 2026

This special February issue of Thinking Aloud focuses on the economic choices facing Bangladesh's next government at a moment of heightened uncertainty and expectation. With growth slowing, inflation lingering, investment confidence weakened, and inequality rising, this edition examines the priorities that will determine whether Bangladesh can move beyond crisis management toward inclusive and sustainable recovery.

[Read the Full Issue](#)

Energy Outlook

January 2026 | Vol 2 Issue 3

A Renewable Energy Agenda for the New Government: From Rhetoric to Reform

This issue highlights Bangladesh's shift from rhetoric to reform, stressing institutional credibility, smarter incentives, and bankable financing to scale renewable energy, overcome fossil fuel bias, mobilize private capital, and realistically achieve transition goals.

[Read the Full Issue](#)



Monthly Highlights



SANEM Dissemination Workshop on Bangladesh's Energy Transition



On 20 January 2026, SANEM, in collaboration with the TARA Climate Foundation, organised an online dissemination workshop to share findings from its year-long study on Bangladesh's energy transition, under the theme "Navigating Bangladesh's Energy Transition: Economic Resilience, Green Incentives, and Industrial Efficiency." The session was opened by Dr Shawkat Ara Begum, Program Director, TARA Climate Foundation Bangladesh, and moderated by Dr Selim Raihan, Executive Director, SANEM.

SANEM presented the study in three components, with Md Tuhin Ahmed, Honorary Deputy Director, presenting the first two, and Israt Hossain, Director, presenting the third. The panel featured leading policymakers and energy experts, including representatives from BEPRC, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, North South University, United International University, and IEEFA, who discussed strategies to enhance economic resilience, promote green incentives, and improve industrial efficiency in Bangladesh's energy sector.

Dr Selim Raihan at the UN-OHRLLS Mission for the Graduation Readiness Assessment of Nepal

24-28 January 2026: Dr Selim Raihan, as a member of Nepal’s Graduation Readiness Assessment team, participated in the multi-stakeholder consultations in Kathmandu. The consultations focused on assessing Nepal’s progress toward LDC graduation, identifying potential risks, and formulating policy recommendations to support a smooth and sustainable transition.



SANEM Brown Bag Seminar Episode 7: Research Associate Shafa Tasneem



25 January 2026: In the 7th episode of Brown Bag Seminar Series, Research Associate Shafa Tasneem presented her research on Determinants of Investment Diversification: Enterprise Level Analysis in the Context of LDC Graduation, offering important insights into firms’ diversification decisions as Bangladesh prepares for its LDC graduation.

SANEM Expert Group Meeting on ESG in RMG Sector

29 January 2026: SANEM’s Sustainability Centre, with Impact Investment Exchange (IIX), hosted an Expert Group Meeting on ESG in Bangladesh’s RMG sector. Industry and financial experts discussed how ESG practices are applied on the factory floor, gaps in current assessments, and practical approaches to building context-aware ESG frameworks.





Opinion

The Quiet Strain Behind Economic Headlines

Dr Selim Raihan

5 January 2026: Bangladesh's economy appears stable on the surface, but underlying pressures remain. In this op-ed, Dr Raihan examines how slowing growth, persistent inflation, financial sector stress, and political instability are hindering recovery. He argues that the current phase of the economy reflects fragility rather than a genuine resurgence.

[Read more](#)

Whether 2026 becomes a turning point will depend heavily on whether the political transition restores order, reduces uncertainty, and persuades investors that the future is brighter.

Opinion

A New Social Contract for Workers in Bangladesh

Zubayer Hossen

7 January 2026: Bangladesh's economic progress has been driven by millions of workers, yet dignity, security, and fair pay remain elusive. Zubayer Hossen, SANEM's Programme Director, asserts that the key issue is no longer whether reform is necessary, but whether Bangladesh is ready to transform its relationship with labour through a new social contract- one that treats workers as partners rather than costs.

[Read more](#)

The question before the country is no longer whether workers deserve more, but whether Bangladesh is prepared to redefine the relationship between labour, business, and the state through a new social contract.

Opinion

How Modern Wind Turbine Technology Can Reshape Bangladesh's Energy Future

Israt Hossain & Sudepto Roy

11 January 2026: Wind energy is no longer a distant possibility for Bangladesh. In this op-ed, SANEM's Director, Israt Hossain and Research Associate Sudepto Roy explore how modern wind turbine technologies could reshape the country's energy future supporting cleaner growth while reducing dependence on fossil fuel.

[Read more](#)

The adoption of wind power is expected to speed up the development trajectory for Bangladesh, as it will not only be a green energy source for households but also a powerhouse for the national economy.

Opinion

A Strategy for Durable Poverty Reduction in Bangladesh

Mahtab Uddin

Social protection must be consolidated, better targeted, and funded at levels that effectively safeguard living standards during shocks.

17 January 2026: Despite significant progress in recent decades, poverty reduction in Bangladesh remains fragile. SANEM's Research Director Mahtab Uddin, argues that sustainable poverty reduction requires a comprehensive, multi-pillar strategy- ranging from accurate identification of poor households to enhanced social protection, quality public services, decent employment, and improved governance.

[Read more](#)

Opinion

Will Delaying LDC Graduation Address Problems Long Ignored?

Dr Selim Raihan

25 January 2026: Delaying Bangladesh's graduation from LDC status may offer short-term breathing space, but it leaves unresolved the structural constraints that continue to limit economic transformation. In this article, Dr Raihan, Executive Director of SANEM, examines whether postponement can substitute for long-overdue reforms in competitiveness, institutional capacity, export diversification, and policy coordination needed for sustained growth.

[Read more](#)

The real question facing Bangladesh today is not whether it qualifies for graduation, but whether it is prepared for what comes after.

Opinion

Bangladesh's Renewable Ambitions Aren't Actually Unrealistic

Sudepto Roy

27 January 2026: SANEM's Research Associate, Sudepto Roy argues that Bangladesh's renewable energy goals are not unrealistic if financing mechanisms evolve. The piece highlights how blended finance, green bonds, sukuk, stronger institutional support, and deeper engagement with development partners can unlock long-term capital and accelerate the energy transition.

[Read more](#)

The real choice is between drifting into an unprepared graduation or using that moment to redefine the country's development trajectory.

Opinion

Primary Education System in Bangladesh: Bridging the Gap between Hopes and Outcomes

Eshrat Sharmin

29 January 2026: Bangladesh's primary education system has made significant gains in expanding access, yet learning outcomes remain uneven across regions and educational institutions. In this article, Eshrat Sharmin, Deputy Director of SANEM, examines the structural gaps between expectations and outcomes and highlights the need for reforms in governance, incentives, and resource allocation to improve learning quality and equity.

[Read more](#)

Bridging the gap between enrollment and learning outcomes requires not only more resources but smarter use of existing ones.

Opinion

Can the New Government Get the Renewables Policy Right?

Md Razib

31 January 2026: Bangladesh's renewable energy transition hinges on whether the new government can move beyond targets toward credible implementation. In this article, SANEM's Research Associate, Md Razib examines the gaps in the current renewables policy and outlines what is needed to align ambition with financing, institutions, and execution.

[Read more](#)

Currencies instability, frequent regulatory changes, and the lack of reliable guarantees discourage many foreign investors.

Knowledge Products



The Economy the Next Government Inherits, and the Choices That Will Shape What Comes Next

Dr Selim Raihan

The policy paper, "The Economy the Next Government Inherits, and the Choices That Will Shape What Comes Next" by Selim Raihan (2026), provides a comprehensive analysis of Bangladesh's economic challenges as it prepares for graduation from LDC status. It argues that stabilisation alone will not restore growth or confidence. The paper advocates for a balanced macroeconomic strategy, emphasizing inflation control, investment revival, financial sector repair, and strong domestic resource mobilisation. It calls for policy reforms in tax, expenditure, and industrial strategy, focusing on sustainable growth, job creation, and climate resilience. The next government faces a historic choice to implement inclusive policies for long-term prosperity.



[Read the Policy Paper](#)



Announcement



SANEM Calendar 2026:

Faces of Progress: Women Driving Bangladesh Forward



SANEM is proud to present this year's calendar's theme "Faces of Progress: Women Driving Bangladesh Forward" that resonates far beyond dates and months. It is a celebration of the women whose determination, vision, and leadership are quietly but profoundly shaping the nation's future.

Across sectors from RMG factories and farms to classrooms, hospitals, tech hubs, and boardrooms- these women are breaking long-standing barriers, transforming communities, and redefining what progress looks like. Their achievements are not isolated triumphs; they ripple outward, inspiring new generations and reminding us that true development is inclusive, grounded in opportunity for all.

By highlighting these stories, SANEM hopes to spark reflection as much as recognition. Gender equality is not merely a moral imperative; it is an economic, social, and cultural force that strengthens the foundations of our society. In every story captured in this calendar, we see the power of women to drive not just change, but lasting transformation in Bangladesh.

[Download the Calendar](#)





The South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), established in 2007, is a Dhaka-based non-profit research organization. Over the past nearly two decades, it has grown into an international platform for economists, researchers, policymakers, and institutions committed to promoting high-quality, evidence-based economic analysis and informed policy advocacy in Bangladesh, South Asia, and beyond. SANEM conducts both quantitative and qualitative research on a broad range of development issues, including macroeconomics, international trade, poverty, inequality, labor markets, climate change, political economy, renewable energy, human capital, agriculture, social protection, and sustainability, and translates its findings into policy briefs, technical papers, and public discussions aimed at supporting effective decision-making. Through collaborative projects, training programs, conferences, publications, and initiatives for young economists, SANEM plays a key role in strengthening research capacity, fostering policy engagement, and contributing to inclusive and sustainable economic development in the region.



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