

NEWSLETTER



MONTHLY UPDATE

SANEM ROUNDUP

VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 8 | JUNE 2026

SANEM
RESEARCH | KNOWLEDGE | DEVELOPMENT

Content

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In March-May,

SANEM organised several major events. The 9th SANEM Annual Economists' Conference (9SAEC) brought together economists, policymakers, and development practitioners to discuss policy responses to Bangladesh's evolving development challenges. In partnership with the World Bank, SANEM also organised the #ClearHerPath University Quiz Competition, engaging university students on women's labour force participation and gender inclusion.

On the research side, SANEM produced studies on the economic implications of the Middle East conflict on Bangladesh, pathways for renewable energy transition and financing, reforms needed in social protection systems, labour market challenges, and strategies for strengthening trade competitiveness ahead of LDC graduation. These findings were disseminated through Thinking Aloud, Energy Outlook, policy briefs, and opinion pieces covering climate finance, transport sustainability, trade agreements, and the economic effects of fossil fuel price shocks.

SANEM Spotlight



Energy Outlook

April 2026 | Vol 2 Issue 4

Bangladesh's Renewable Energy Supply Chain: Gaps, Barriers, and the Path Forward

This issue explores the gaps in Bangladesh's renewable energy supply chain and highlights the reforms needed in manufacturing, taxation, quality assurance, and workforce development to support a secure and sustainable energy transition.



[Read the Full Issue](#)

Thinking Aloud

Volume XIII, Issue 1: June 1, 2026

This issue of Thinking Aloud examines Bangladesh's social protection system at a pivotal moment of reform. As the Family Card pilot is rolled out, the edition explores whether current approaches are equipped to address evolving forms of vulnerability driven by inflation, urbanisation, climate shocks, and labour market changes. It highlights the need for a more integrated, inclusive, and adaptive social protection framework that can effectively protect vulnerable populations while supporting long-term development.



[Read the Full Issue](#)

SANEM Spotlight



Thinking Aloud

Volume XII, Issue 12: 1 May 2026

This issue of Thinking Aloud reflects on key discussions from the 9th SANEM Annual Economists' Conference (9SAEC) 2026. The featured article, "The Bay of Bengal Bargain: Rethinking Trade and Economic Security" by Selim Raihan, argues that growing trade disruptions, energy insecurity, and climate risks have made regional cooperation a necessity rather than a choice. The article calls for stronger economic collaboration among BIMSTEC countries to enhance resilience, strengthen trade security, and address shared development challenges.



[Read the Full Issue](#)



[Read the Full Issue](#)

Thinking Aloud

Volume XII, Issue 11: April 1, 2026

This issue of Thinking Aloud examines how Bangladesh can navigate mounting economic, educational, and disaster-related challenges through effective reforms and long-term planning. It argues that the FY2026–27 budget must balance economic stabilisation with structural transformation, while education reform and earthquake preparedness require stronger implementation and institutional commitment to deliver meaningful results.

Monthly Highlights



#ClearHerPath University Quiz Competition - Bangladesh Chapter BREAKING THE BARRIER



On 20 May 2026, SANEM and the World Bank brought the #ClearHerPath University Quiz Competition to Dhaka, gathering around 200 students from universities across Bangladesh at Sheraton Dhaka. Five finalist teams drawing students from University of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar University, BRAC University, North South University, East West University, and Bangladesh University of Professionals competed across four challenging rounds. Team Curium, Champion, represented the Departments of Economics and Women and Gender Studies, University of Dhaka. The runner-up, Team Spriha (স্প্রিহা), brought together students from the Departments of Development Studies and the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka. The event reaffirmed that Bangladesh's youth is ready to engage with the data, question the norms, and push for a more inclusive economy.

Expert Group Meeting on Poverty and Vulnerability in Bangladesh



On 17 May 2026, SANEM, in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), hosted an Expert Group Meeting on “Poverty and Vulnerability in Bangladesh: Challenges and the Way Forward.” The event brought together economists, development practitioners, and government officials to discuss the drivers of household vulnerability, rising inequality, and the effects of climate and economic shocks. The discussions focused on strengthening social protection, expanding enterprise finance for vulnerable populations, and developing shock-responsive policies to build a more resilient and inclusive development pathway for Bangladesh.

Strengthening Industrial Planning through Comprehensive Industry Survey

On 7 May 2026: SANEM, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), organized the Inception Workshop on the “Survey of Industries in Bangladesh” at the BIDA Conference Room in Dhaka. The workshop brought together key stakeholders to discuss the survey’s objectives, scope, and methodology, marking an important step toward generating robust evidence to inform industrial policy, investment planning, and sustainable economic development in Bangladesh.



Celebrating Bengali New Year 1433 with the SANEM Family



15 April 2026: Amid the busy schedule of the 9th SANEM Annual Economists' Conference (9SAEC) 2026, SANEM members came together to celebrate Pohela Boishakh 1433, the Bengali New Year. The celebration provided an opportunity for colleagues to strengthen camaraderie and embrace Bangladesh's rich cultural heritage.

Focus Group Discussion on Strengthening Bangladesh's Solar Supply Chain

10 March 2026: SANEM convened a Focus Group Discussion on "Strengthening Bangladesh's Solar Supply Chain", bringing together key industry stakeholders to examine challenges and opportunities in the solar energy sector. Discussions focused on raw material sourcing, manufacturing constraints, the impact of import duties and VAT on solar energy costs, and the potential for local component production. Participants also emphasized the importance of developing a skilled technical workforce to support Bangladesh's growing renewable energy ambitions and ensure a sustainable energy transition.



Celebrating International Women's Day 2026 at SANEM



8 March 2026: SANEM celebrated International Women's Day 2026 by recognising and appreciating the contributions of the women who help advance the organisation's vision, research, and policy work. The gathering brought together colleagues and staff members in a spirit of gratitude, inclusion, and solidarity, highlighting the importance of women's participation and leadership in economic research, policy engagement, and institutional development.

9th SANEM Annual Economists' Conference (9SAEC) 2026



The 9th SANEM Annual Economists' Conference (9SAEC) 2026, themed "Development Challenges and Policy Responses in a Changing World", was held on 17–19 April 2026 at BRAC Centre Inn, Dhaka.

The conference opened with a keynote address delivered via Zoom by Dr Shantayanan Devarajan, titled "The Cost of Denial: How Economic Growth Undermines Governance Reform," moderated by Dr Selim Raihan and discussed by Dr Kunal Sen and Professor Rehman Sobhan.

Over three days, the conference featured a rich programme of plenary and panel sessions covering themes such as decarbonising development, trade and macroeconomic challenges in South Asia, Bangladesh's emerging political settlement, regional energy security, ESG practices, and trade and economic security in the Bay of Bengal region. A notable roundtable on the third day reviewed the Asian Development Bank's Country Diagnostics Study for Bangladesh, focused on diversification and resilience deficits. The conference also hosted 22 breakout sessions spanning macroeconomics, labour markets, gender economics, climate change, agriculture, health economics, migration, governance, and social protection, bringing together economists, policymakers, academics, and development practitioners from across South Asia and beyond.

Since its inception in 2016, the SAEC has grown into SANEM's flagship annual event, and this edition reinforced its standing as a premier platform for rigorous, policy-relevant economic dialogue in the region.

Opinion

সংস্কার ছাড়া অর্থনীতির 'অন্ধগলি' থেকে বের হওয়া কঠিন

Dr Selim Raihan

22 May 2026: Dr Selim Raihan stressed that meaningful reforms in key sectors, particularly banking and taxation, are essential for addressing Bangladesh's longstanding structural economic challenges. Speaking at a virtual discussion on the first 100 days of the BNP government, he highlighted the importance of coordinated reforms, transparency, and accountability in achieving inclusive growth and reducing inequality.

[Read more](#)

ব্যংক ও কর খাতে
মম্বিত মংস্কার না
হলে বাংলাদেশ
রাজনৈতিক
অর্থনীতির 'অন্ধগলি'
থেকে বের হতে পারবে
না।

Opinion

Unmasking the Systemic Crisis Behind Our Deadly Roads

Mahtab Uddin

Road accidents in Bangladesh are not isolated tragedies; they reflect deeper structural failures in transport governance, infrastructure, and policy.

29 March 2026: The article argues that road fatalities are driven not only by reckless driving but also by policy failures, including high taxes on safer vehicles and safety equipment, weak transport governance, corruption in vehicle fitness and licensing systems, poor road infrastructure, inadequate public transport, and ineffective emergency response mechanisms. It calls for comprehensive transport-sector reforms, fiscal policy adjustments, stronger enforcement, and improved road safety infrastructure to reduce preventable deaths and create a safer transport system.

[Read more](#)

Opinion

Bangladesh Needs to Move Up in Global Value Chains Through Industrial Upgrading

Dr Selim Raihan

17 May 2026: Bangladesh's garment-led growth model has delivered remarkable export success, but sustaining competitiveness after LDC graduation will require moving beyond low-value production activities. In this article, Dr Selim Raihan highlights the need for industrial upgrading, export diversification, stronger domestic capabilities, and deeper integration into regional value chains to support long-term productivity growth and economic resilience.

[Read more](#)

The harder task now is to move from assembly to capability, from preference dependence to competitiveness, and from one-sector dominance to a broader industrial base.

Opinion

অর্থায়ন সংকটে থমকে আছে বাংলাদেশের নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি রূপান্তর

Md Razib

শুধু সরকারি
অর্থায়নের মাধ্যমে এ
বিশাল চাহিদা পূরণ
মস্কব নয়; বড়
পরিমারে বেসরকারি
বিনিয়োগ অপরিহার্য।

3 May 2026: Bangladesh's renewable energy transition continues to be constrained by a significant financing gap, limiting the country's ability to reduce its dependence on imported fossil fuels and strengthen energy security. The article highlights the need for financing reforms, greater private sector participation, and targeted policy support to accelerate investment in renewable energy projects.

[Read more](#)

Opinion

দেশের বাজেট হওয়া উচিত অর্থনৈতিক রূপান্তরের নীতিপত্র, স্বেচ্ছ আয়-ব্যয়ের হিসাব নয়

Dr Selim Raihan

7 May 2026: In this interview, Dr Selim Raihan argues that Bangladesh's national budget should serve as a roadmap for economic transformation rather than merely an accounting exercise. He highlights the need for structural reforms in taxation, banking, energy, education, investment, and employment generation to support sustainable growth and long-term development.

[Read more](#)

গবেষণাকে
বিলম্বিত হিমেবে
নয়, উন্নয়নের
মৌলিক বিনিয়োগ
হিমেবে দেখতে হবে।

Opinion

Bangladesh's Solar Ambition Needs Skilled Hands to Succeed

Mohammad Iftekharul Islam and Md Tuhin Ahmed

Bangladesh needs more solar, but it needs a workforce for it even more. Energy security will not come from solar panels alone but from the skilled hands that make them work.

30 April 2026: Bangladesh's renewable energy ambitions will depend not only on expanding solar capacity but also on developing the skilled workforce needed to install, operate, and maintain it. The authors argue that addressing gaps in technical and vocational training is essential for ensuring energy security, supporting local manufacturing, and achieving the country's long-term renewable energy targets.

[Read more](#)

Opinion

মূল্যস্ফীতির নতুন চাপ: গ্রাম ও শহরের সংকট একসঙ্গে দেখতে হবে

Dr Selim Raihan

“মূল্যস্ফীতি শেষ পর্যন্ত শুধু একটি পরিমংখ্যান নয়; এটি মানুষের খাবার কমে যাওয়া, চিকিৎসা পিছিয়ে দেওয়া, মস্তানের শিক্ষা ব্যয় কাটছাঁট করা এবং জীবনের মান নেমে যাওয়ার বাস্তব সংকট।”

6 May 2026: With inflation rising above 9% in April 2026, both rural and urban households are facing mounting financial pressure. In this analysis, Dr Selim Raihan argues that inflation should not be viewed solely as a monetary policy issue, but as a multidimensional challenge linked to supply chains, energy costs, market governance, and social protection. He emphasizes the need for coordinated policy responses to protect vulnerable and low-income groups from the growing cost-of-living crisis.

[Read more](#)

Opinion

Cheap Labour No Longer Enough as LDC Graduation Meets Middle East Turmoil

Dipa Das

30 March 2026: The article argues that Bangladesh can no longer rely on low labour costs as its primary competitive advantage and must instead focus on productivity, technology adoption, supply-chain resilience, skills development, and export competitiveness. It also highlights the risks posed by rising freight costs, energy insecurity, automation-driven labour displacement, and the need for targeted support for women workers and SMEs in the sector.

[Read more](#)

We can no longer win by just being the cheapest; we have to be the smartest.

Opinion

তেলের মূল্যবৃদ্ধি: নিম্নবিত্ত ও মধ্যবিত্তের কথা ভাবছে কি সরকার

Dr Selim Raihan

21 April 2026: In this opinion piece, Dr Selim Raihan examines the economic implications of the recent fuel price hike amid ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. He argues that while fuel price adjustments may be unavoidable, the government must carefully assess their impact on inflation, transportation costs, food security, and the livelihoods of low- and middle-income households. The article also stresses the importance of structural reforms, targeted social protection measures, and a crisis-responsive budget to address growing economic vulnerabilities.

[Read more](#)

মূল্যবৃদ্ধি করাটা হয়তো খুব মোজা একটি পদ্ধতি, কিন্তু কঠিন কাজটা হলো অভিঘাতগুলো নিয়ে যাচাই-বাহাই করা এবং মেই অনুযায়ী একটি পরিকল্পনার অধীন মেটা বাস্তবায়ন করা।

Opinion

Bridging the Financing Gap in Bangladesh's Renewable Energy Transition

Md Razib

The financing gap remains the most significant barrier to Bangladesh's renewable energy transition.

11 May 2026: Bangladesh's renewable energy transition is being held back by a significant financing gap, despite growing energy security concerns and ambitious renewable energy targets.

The article argues that unlocking private investment, reforming financing mechanisms, and improving policy support are essential for accelerating the country's shift toward sustainable energy.

[Read more](#)

Opinion

Can Family Card Reset Our Social Protection System?

Dr Selim Raihan

02 March 2026 : Dr Selim Raihan examines Bangladesh's proposed Family Card initiative as a potential catalyst for comprehensive social protection reform. The article highlights how a unified beneficiary registry, digital payment systems, and better programme integration could address longstanding challenges such as exclusion errors, duplication, and administrative inefficiencies. It argues that social protection should be viewed not merely as welfare assistance but as a strategic economic policy instrument for strengthening resilience, reducing inequality, and supporting inclusive development.

[Read more](#)

Social protection is not charity. It is an economic policy. If done well, it increases resilience, raises human capital, and reduces inequality in a way that growth alone cannot.

Opinion

Iran War Could Wipe Out Up to 3% of Bangladesh GDP

Dr Selim Raihan

Bangladesh's development model has relied on export-led manufacturing and overseas employment, but that same integration exposes it to external shocks

16 March 2026: This analysis by Dr Selim Raihan finds that a prolonged US-Israel-Iran conflict could reduce Bangladesh's GDP by up to 3% through higher energy costs, trade disruptions, and lower remittance inflows.

Using a GTAP-based economic model, the study highlights Bangladesh's vulnerability to external shocks and stresses the need for energy diversification, export market expansion, and stronger economic resilience.

[Read more](#)

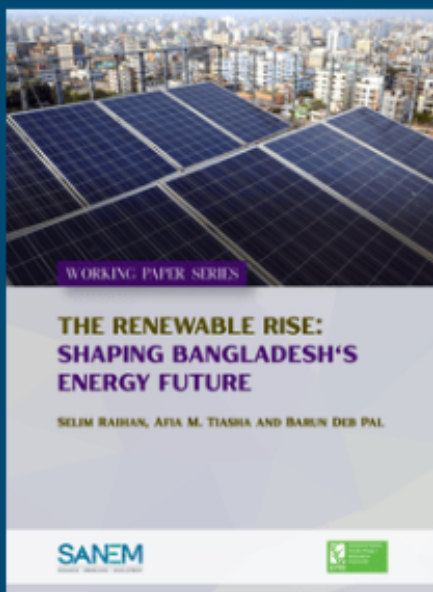
Knowledge Products



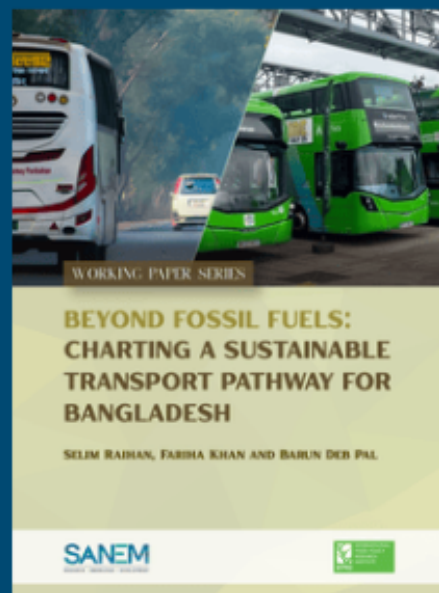
**From Vulnerability to Viability:
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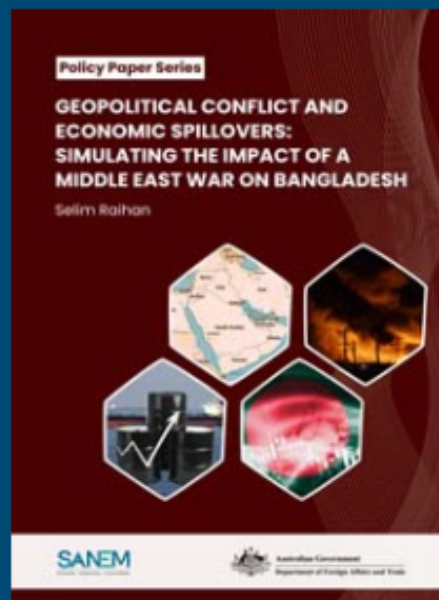
**Beyond Fossil Fuels:
Charting a Sustainable Transport
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**Strengthening Trade Competitiveness:
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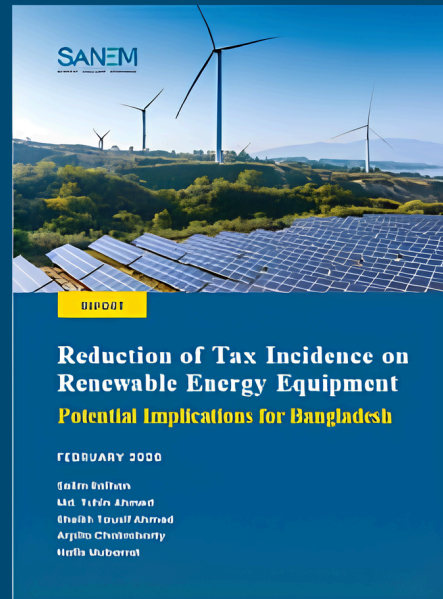
**Market Access, Policy Space, and
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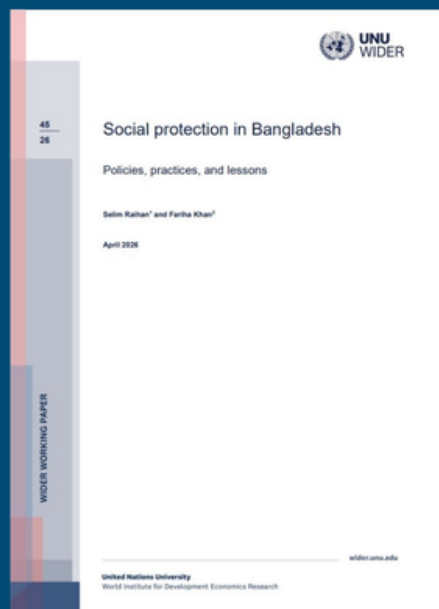
**Geopolitical Conflict and Economic
Spillovers: Simulating the Impact of
A Middle East War on Bangladesh**



Economy-wide Effects of Fossil Fuel Price Shocks on Macro, Sectoral and Household Welfare



Reduction of Tax Incidence on Renewable Energy Equipment: Potential Implications for Bangladesh



Social Protection in Bangladesh: Policies, Practices and Lessons

Announcement

Congratulations to Nafis Mubarrat on His Promotion

26 April 2026: SANEM extends its warm congratulations to Nafis Mubarrat on his promotion to Research Associate. This achievement reflects his dedication, hard work, and valuable contributions to SANEM's research activities. We wish him many more accomplishments in the years ahead.

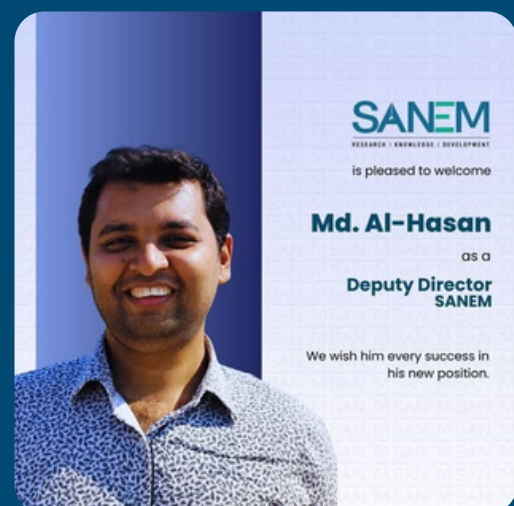


Welcoming Farhan Khan as Senior Research Associate

1 April 2026: SANEM is excited to welcome Farhan Khan as Senior Research Associate. His academic and research experience will contribute to the organisation's mission of producing high-quality research and supporting effective policy engagement. Hope you have a rewarding and successful journey with us.

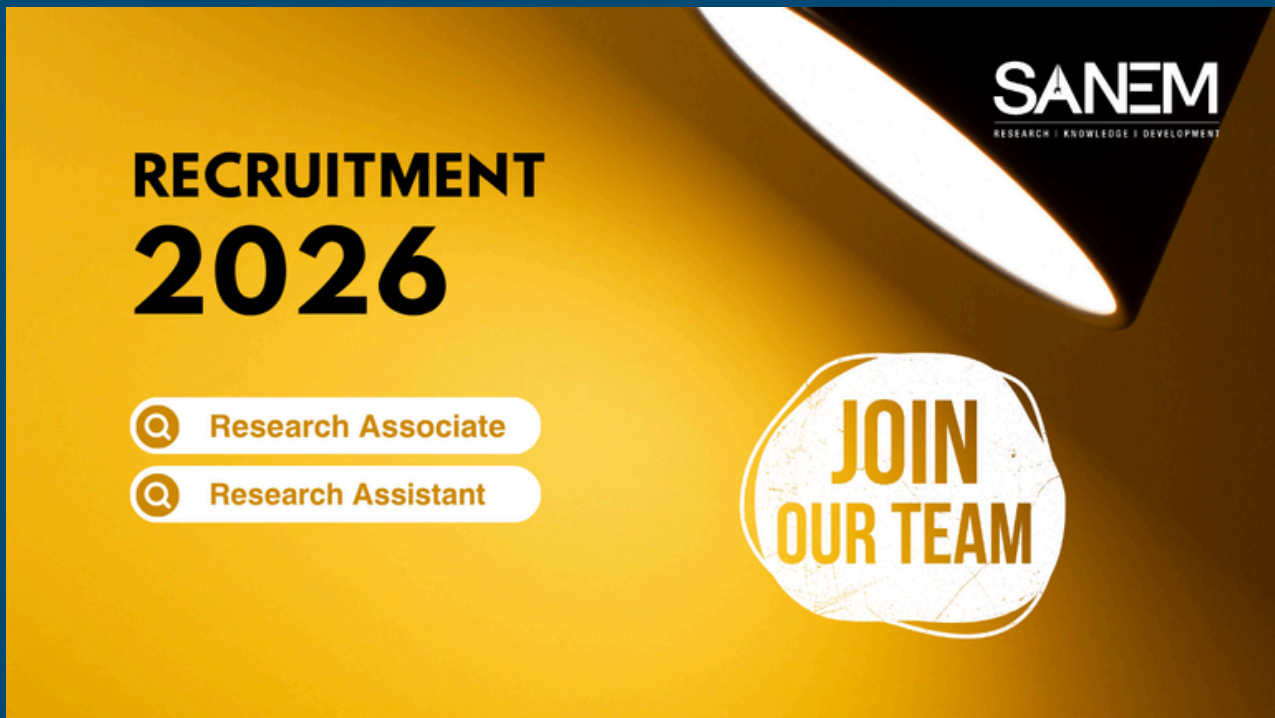
Welcoming Md. Al-Hasan as Deputy Director at SANEM

1 March 2026: SANEM warmly welcomes Md. Al-Hasan as Deputy Director. We are excited about the expertise and leadership he brings to the team and look forward to his contributions to advancing SANEM's mission and activities. We wish him every success in his new role.



Announcement

SANEM RECRUITMENT 2026



SANEM is pleased to announce openings for the positions of Research Associate and Research Assistant.

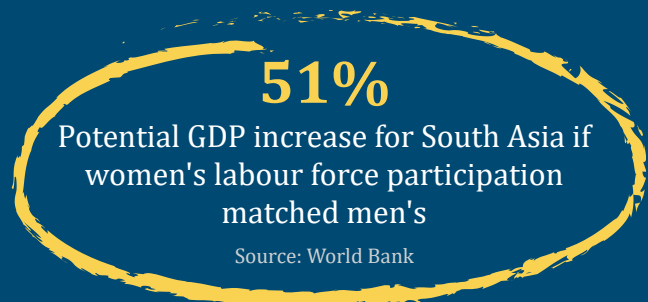
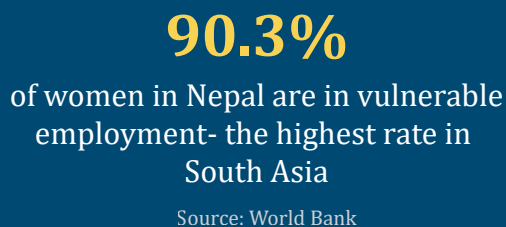
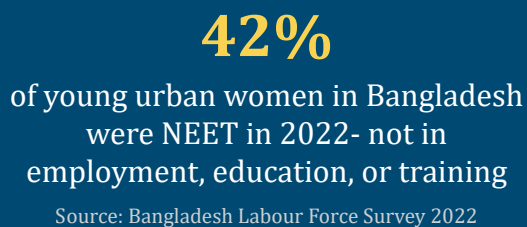
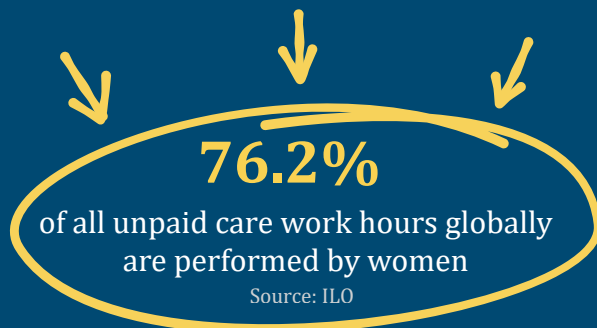
We are seeking motivated, analytical, and research-oriented individuals who are passionate about applied economics, development research, and evidence-based policy analysis.

[Call for Applications: Research Associate:](#) This position involves conducting independent and collaborative policy-oriented economic research, including data analysis, econometric work, and preparation of research papers, policy briefs, and reports. The role also includes supporting research design, implementation, and dissemination of findings.

[Call for Application: Research Assistant:](#) This position involves supporting ongoing research activities, including data collection and cleaning, literature reviews, basic data analysis, and assistance in report writing and documentation.

Interested candidates are requested to visit the respective application links attached above for detailed information and submission guidelines.

Did You Know?



South Asia has the world's second-lowest female labour force participation rate. The biggest barrier? Not jobs, not education but social norms. In fact, women with tertiary education are the most likely to be unemployed in the region.

In Bangladesh, the RMG sector drove decades of women's employment gains yet women's share within it is quietly shrinking as automation advances and skills upgrades bypass them.

These figures formed the backbone of the questions at the #ClearHerPath University Quiz Competition: Bangladesh Chapter where students competed across four rounds to confront the evidence behind women's economic exclusion and ask what comes next.



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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