North South University Strengthens China–South Asia Academic Cooperation at International Conference in Kunming

Kunming, China, 24–25 October 2026: North South University (NSU), Bangladesh, contributed to the Second International Conference on China–South Asia Civilization and Connectivity, co-hosted with Yunnan University at its Donglu Campus in Kunming, China. Held under the theme "Harmony in Diversity, Unity for All," the conference brought together more than 60 scholars and experts from China, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other countries to examine regional connectivity, civilizational dialogue, diplomatic relations and development cooperation.



The event built on the inaugural conference convened at North South University in Dhaka in December 2024. The collaboration was supported by the China–South Asia Center for Socio-Cultural Studies (CSCSS), associated with the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at NSU, and academic partners at Yunnan University, including its School of Ethnology and Sociology and the Center for Southwest Frontier Ethnic Minority Studies. The conference reflected a sustained institutional commitment to scholarship and people-to-people engagement across China and South Asia.





At the opening ceremony on 24 October, Professor Ma Wenhui, President of Yunnan University, highlighted the historical and cultural connections between China and South Asia and the importance of academic exchange in strengthening mutual understanding. Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, reflected on the two-decade partnership between the institutions, tracing its development from the establishment of the Confucius Institute at NSU in 2006 to the launch of CSCSS in 2023 and broader cooperation in research and education.







A major outcome of the inauguration was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on inter-university cooperation by Professor Nasar U. Ahmed, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of NSU, and Professor Yang Shaojun, Vice President of Yunnan University. The institutions also launched a joint "2+1+1" undergraduate programme in anthropology, creating a further avenue for educational collaboration and student exchange.

NSU faculty members made substantive contributions to the keynote sessions. Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director of SIPG, delivered an address titled "Power, Partnership, and People: Analyzing the Economic, Strategic, and Human Dimensions of China–South Asia Relations in the 21st Century." His presentation considered the opportunities and structural tensions shaping relations between China and South Asia from economic, strategic and human-centred perspectives. Professor Mohammad Bulbul Ashraf Siddiqi, Director of the Confucius Institute at NSU, presented "Beyond Connectivity: Bangladesh's Strategic Approach towards the Bangladesh, China and Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCM-EC)," examining the relationship between economic connectivity, strategic autonomy and human security. The keynote programme also included scholars from the Chinese host institutions, including Professor Jing Jun of Tsinghua University and Professor He Ming of Yunnan University.





Across the research sessions, NSU-associated scholars and researchers examined a wide range of questions relevant to Bangladesh–China relations and wider regional cooperation. Ambassador Mohammad Sufiur Rahman (Retd.) presented "Enhanced Trust and New

Directions for Bangladesh-China Alignment: In a Polarising World," while Dr. Harisur Rahman discussed "Rethinking Connectivity: Media and Intercultural Collaboration in China–Bangladesh Relations." Dr. Md. Ziaul Haq Adnan addressed regional transport and supply chains through his paper, "Unlocking the China-Myanmar-Bangladesh Economic Corridor: A Multimodal Strategy for Regional Integration and Supply Chain Resilience."





Dr. S. M. Rubyat presented "Post-Colonial Reality and the Epistemological Hyperopia: Relevance of Eastern Wisdom in Shaping the Socio-Cultural and Policy Discourse in Bangladesh." Dr. Noor Mohammad Sarker examined regional platforms and foreign-policy choices in "Bangladesh's Pursuit of Multilateralism and its Alignment with the China-led Global Platforms: Towards Greater Strategic Autonomy?" Riyasad Iqbal of SIPG presented "Blue-Green Connectivity in Bangladesh-China Relations: Water Governance, Energy Cooperation, and Multimodal Transport Routes," exploring the potential to integrate environmental management, energy cooperation and transport planning into discussions of regional connectivity.





The programme featured thematic discussions on political and diplomatic relations, infrastructure and trade corridors, media and intercultural communication, public health, knowledge production and cooperation within the Global South. Alongside established scholars, participation by emerging researchers from SIPG and CSCSS provided opportunities for international academic exposure, research exchange and engagement with scholars from across the region.



The conference further strengthened ongoing academic ties between NSU and Yunnan University. Together, the newly signed MoU, the joint anthropology programme and the exchange of research perspectives demonstrated the institutions' shared interest in sustained educational cooperation, cross-cultural understanding and evidence-based discussion on the future of China–South Asia relations.

