

## NSU Commemorates International Peace Day 2024

**Dhaka, September 21, 2024:** “The erosion of institutions under the previous regime underscores the need for transformation within the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Rebuilding trust in law enforcement and the administration is also critical’ Tahmid Al Mudassir Chowdhury, one of the student coordinators of the Anti-discriminatory Student Movement and a student of Dhaka University, mentioned in his speech in a student roundtable discussion commemorating International Peace Day 2024 organized by the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University (NSU). The celebrations resonated with this year's United Nations theme: ‘Cultivating a Culture of Peace.’ He further emphasized that political reform is imperative. In this speech, he also indicated that “We lack a clear roadmap for political transitions and addressing potential crises. Establishing transparent pathways for governmental change is crucial for stability.”



Prapti Taposhi, a cultural activist who actively engaged herself in the July Revolution from Jahangirnagar University, mentioned in her speech, “While "peace" is a broad term, its definition and acceptance among stakeholders may vary depending on situation and perspectives. Building inclusive peace necessitates acknowledging these diverse perspectives”. In her speech, she indicates that the absence of truly neutral elections since Bangladesh's liberation highlights the need for an impartial election commission. Our fight was not for the rehabilitation of any specific party, but for establishing genuine democracy.

“Establishing peace is paramount. If we are truly human, what has gone wrong in our education system that people are becoming psychologically violent?” said Afia Jannat Anonna from Brac University, addressing the persistence of interdisciplinary conflicts is crucial for achieving peace.

She stressed that reforms should address the monopoly of institutions like Dhaka University (DU) and urged for broader change. She highlighted that in times of moral crisis, it becomes our collective responsibility to speak up. She pointed to the education policy as a key area requiring reform, as it reflects the kind of society we wish to create. Afia connected failures in education policy to the growing issue of unemployment and questioned whether these two issues are intertwined.



The moderator of this event, Ms. Parisa Shakur, Senior Lecturer, welcomes all the panelists and honorable guests to this program. She also mentioned in her welcome speech that peace is the most precious resource now in the conflict-ridden world. The discussant of this program, Dr. M Jashim Uddin, Associate Professor, NSU highlighted CPS's role in promoting peace, sustainability, and diplomacy through research, dialogue, and community engagement. He elaborated on how peace can be established through political and social contexts in our society. Although it's a difficult process, one day, it will be established in our society. He further indicates that we should ensure justice in our society by ensuring everyone's rights. He, however, mentions that we should also think that we are not going to harm others in establishing our own interests. He also mentions that Gen Z has played a crucial role in safeguarding our nation's sovereignty and integrity, and they continue to inspire us in the July 2024 revolution. Their actions in toppling the fascist regime have demonstrated that absolute power leads not just to corruption but to utter devastation.

“Our healthcare system requires urgent attention. The current doctor-patient and bed-patient ratios are alarmingly inadequate. We must prioritize the needs of ordinary people, who play an extraordinary role in our movements, when designing and implementing healthcare reform” said Asif Adnan from East West University. Students from North South University took part in the questions and answer session, and they asked the speakers many questions. One of the key points that

dominated the question-answer session was to recognize the role of private university students in the July Revolution.



The program was chaired by the honorable Vice Chancellor of North South University Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury. He extended his gratitude to the CPS and the SIPG for organizing this event. He said “Achieving peace requires moving beyond constant argumentation and breaking down the barriers we've erected in our society. Our young generation has shown a desire to dismantle these walls, and this marks a true revolution for our nation. Let us strive for a future where empathy and understanding prevail, fostering a lasting culture of peace.”



Apart from this roundtable discussion, CPS celebrated this day by organizing a day-long event that included a peace rally, pigeon release, tree plantation, and movie screening. The symbolic release of pigeons, universal emblems of peace, underscored the importance of resolving disputes without conflict. The tree plantation by the Vice Chancellor further cemented the NSU's commitment to environmental sustainability, drawing a parallel between a peaceful world and a thriving planet. Students, faculties, and officials have shared their commitment to peace, sustainability, and diplomacy through this daylong event. The Peace Day program was coordinated by Dr. Abdul Wohab, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of CPS.