

SIPG Hosts Policy Debate on the Future of Bangladesh under the Interim Government

Dhaka, September 26, 2024: The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU) hosted a Policy Debate on the role and expectations of the interim government in Bangladesh on 25 September 2024 (Wednesday) at the university's Plaza area. The post-revolution political climate, including the difficulties and opportunities for change, were the discussion topics at the debate.



Promit Anannyo Chakraborty, Epidemiologist at the University of British Columbia, was one of several prominent experts who took part in the discussion and brought attention to the fact that fair elections in Bangladesh have been lacking for quite some time. He added, “The present atmosphere is tense, and we haven't had legitimate elections in 20 years. The danger of reverting to authoritarianism exists unless we make sure the interim government does not remain in place for too long”.

The ability of the interim administration to execute essential reforms within a constrained period was brought up by Sakif Al Ehsan Khan, a Policy Scholar at SIPG saying, “If we rush into elections, we may repeat past mistakes and invite back authoritarian forces.” He also said, “As a civic nation, we must be patient and allow the interim government the opportunity to utilize the potential that 2024 has brought.”

“After 16 years of fascism, we have a unique opportunity to rebuild our nation,” argued Mohammad Nazmul Avi Hossain, Program Officer, International Labour Organisation (ILO), He argued for a longer duration for the interim administration as an opportunity for meaningful reform would be undermined if the time of the interim government was restricted.



MD Shiyam Sadik, Lecturer at North South University, stressed the importance of the interim administration providing a transparent plan by adding, “We owe the youth, who have given their lives for this movement, honesty and openness.” He also emphasized the need to make sure their efforts are not wasted.

Continuing the conversation, Monoar Alim Tonmoy of bKash Limited and Abrar Hasan, Project research physician at icddr, emphasized the necessity for comprehensive reforms in many sectors and the need for medical assistance for revolution-related injuries. Mr. Abrar also warned against setting inflexible due dates, saying, “Imposing strict deadlines may hinder meaningful change particularly in the health sector”

New political parties were also discussed during the debate, with speakers calling for more openness and responsibility from those in power. At the end of the conversation, Mr. Promit emphasized the need of elections saying, “A legitimate government must emerge through democratic elections to ensure sustainable reforms.”



Dr. Abdul Wohab, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of SIPG's Centre for Peace Studies (CPS), was the moderator of the event. As a significant milestone in Bangladesh's democratic development, the debate gave a forum for fruitful discussion about the country's future leadership. Students and faculties of North South University were present during the Policy debate. Their active participation made the event even more successful.