



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)

1/46 Old Elephant Road, Eskaton, Dhaka

Address of Welcome by

Major General Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, ndc, psc

Director General, BIISS

on the occasion of a National Seminar on

Good Governance in Bangladesh: A National Security Priority

organised by BIISS

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim,

Respected Chair (of this Session Major General Mohammed Firdaus Mian, psc, Chairman, Board of Governors, BIISS,

Major General Olson (Retd), Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI), USA,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning,

It's my privilege and pleasure to welcome you all to today's national seminar on "**Good Governance in Bangladesh: A National Security**

Priority”. Let me at the very out set convey on behalf of today’s Chief guest Mr. H. T. Imam, Adviser to the Honourable Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, his inability to join us for exigency of service. He, however, will try to be free from the emergent commitment to join us if possible.

Distinguished Participants,

Governance and good governance—are much talked about two topics at present in most countries of the world. Simply put "governance" means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance is also what a government does or in other words, governance refers to the functions of a government. Among the essential four elements for a state, government is one of them. It prevails over the rest three, which are populace, land and sovereignty. Therefore, the functions of the government, i.e. governance must be in line with upholding of the overall interests of the respective country and the territory under its jurisdiction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For some years, the term “good governance” has been a widely discussed issue as well. Very simply saying, the just and efficient carrying out of state affairs by the state authority may be termed as good governance.

Today, with so many emerging challenges that come with the package of democratization, globalization, advancement in information technology, the government’s ability to govern is challenged in many ways. While some governments have the capacity to overcome the challenges, others – mostly

those from the developing world- face impediments to good governance. On the other hand, while good governance undoubtedly lies largely in the responsibility of the state to have the ability and commitment to govern, there are other institutions that can contribute to good governance. For decades, governance has been exclusively associated with the role of the state, ignoring other social factors. Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors involved in governance may include influential persons, associations, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions political parties, the military etc. It is the interaction between the state and these actors/institutions that can assist and influence healthy and positive decision making process.

Esteemed Participants,

Although, most definitions confine good governance to politics and sociology, in reality, good governance is also linked inextricably with national security. In a recent workshop on “National Security and Civil Military Relations in Bangladesh” jointly organized by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) with the support of Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, the participants identified absence of good governance as the primary security concern, to the extent of ranking “Good Governance” as first among the top five priorities. A wide range of challenges were listed along with it, including inadequate application of rule of law independent judiciary, political party reform, inadequate parliamentary oversight of Government, ineffective public service commission, reform of civil administration, and inadequate selection and promotion procedures and so on. As a follow-up step, to make further deliberation on these challenges and determine the responses along with the policy recommendations for the government, BISS holds

today's national seminar on **“Good Governance in Bangladesh: A National Security Priority”**.

The seminar expects to raise several questions and concerns: How does good governance or the lack of it impinge on national security? What are the challenges of good governance? Should good governance be incorporated into/considered as an essential security strategy? Can good governance ensure security as understood in a comprehensive sense? These are some the questions that will be addressed in the seminar, and discussed through exchange of ideas and viewpoints among the participants of the seminar. The objectives of the Seminar are to:

- a. Identify key issues and priorities of good governance in the context of Bangladesh.
- b. Understand the correlation between good governance and national security.
- c. Evaluate the state of good governance in Bangladesh in terms of accountability, transparency and rule of law.
- d. Explore and focus on opportunities to allow good governance to take firm root in Bangladesh.

The seminar will have focus on the following three specific areas on which thematic papers will be presented by the key note speakers:(i) Correlation between good governance and national security; (ii) Accountability and transparency; and (iii) the rule of law.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If judged by the existence of features of good governance, Bangladesh has sincerely been pursuing for implementing those features although some objectives have not been implemented to a large extent. But success has to be achieved in implementing all the elements of good governance. Our efforts have to be concerted and wholehearted. We must not lose patience and try our level best to maintain democracy and through democratic practices, we should strive to implement good governance. Good governance is a long process. It is not something one can expect to achieve overnight. As a nation, Bangladesh is comparatively new. We have been through different crises and through our efforts we have overcome them as well. Therefore, there definitely remains hope for us to achieve good governance, an element that is a must for any country to march towards progress.

Thank you all.