



Press Release

Seminar on

Tourism for Attaining SDGs: Challenges and Prospects for Bangladesh

Monday, 30 September 2024

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organised a seminar titled **“Tourism for Attaining SDGs: Challenges and Prospects for Bangladesh”** at the BIISS auditorium on 30 September 2024. **Mr Md Touhid Hossain**, Honourable Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, graced the seminar as the Chief Guest. **Nasreen Jahan**, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, was present as the Special Guest. **Major General Iftekhar Anis**, BSP, awc, afwc, psc, PEng, Director General, BIISS, delivered the welcome address. **Ambassador AFM Gousal Azam Sarker**, Chairman, BIISS, chaired the session.

Mr Abu Sufian, Executive Director of Tourism Research & Development, presented the keynote presentation. A panel discussion followed the Keynote presentation. The panelists were **Dr Sufia Khanom**, Senior Research Fellow, BIISS, **Md Abu Kalam Siddique**, DIG, Tourist Police Bangladesh and **Dr Munal Mahbub**, Director in Charge, FBCCI. There was an open discussion session after the panel discussion.

Speakers and discussants mentioned that Bangladesh boasts a rich array of tourism assets, including forests, beaches, water bodies, hills, wildlife, indigenous cultures, historical and archaeological sites, cultural heritage, folklore, handicrafts, art, and festivals, all of which collectively attract both domestic and international tourists. Although Bangladesh has identified tourism as a key sector for its national development, it faces significant challenges. However, it is anticipated that with well-planned strategies and policies, this industry has the potential to make a substantial contribution to the nation’s economy in its pursuit of sustainable development. Achieving the SDG goals requires a comprehensive evaluation of public policies, strategic frameworks, and government initiatives. The Government of Bangladesh has established three tourism zones, improved facilities at key tourist sites and implemented various policy measures to promote sustainable development through tourism. To revitalize this industry, innovative and strategic actions are urgently needed. Key challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of security and safety, poor communication and transportation networks, and insufficient hotels, motels, and restaurants are significant barriers to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. These gaps in the current tourism framework pose serious threats to its future development and sustainability. Infrastructure improvements and addressing environmental concerns are essential to transform tourism into a major contributor to Bangladesh’s GDP.

Senior officials from different ministries, diplomatic missions, media, researchers, business people, academia, and representatives from various think tanks and international organisations participated in the seminar. They presented their valuable opinions, comments, suggestions, and observations during the open discussion session.