



Photo Exhibition and CPS Dialogue
“One Year On: Revisiting the Role of Youth and Bangladesh’s Transition Towards Democracy”
August 6, 2025, Dhaka



On 6 August 2025, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) at North South University, in collaboration with the Arnold Bergstraesser Institut (ABI) and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS) of Germany, hosted a high-level dialogue and a three-day photo exhibition commemorating the first anniversary of the July Revolution of 2024 in Bangladesh.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Mr. A. K. Kashem, Founder Life Member of the NSU Trust and a member of its Board of Trustees, who underscored the pivotal role of private universities in advancing national progress. He also expressed deep sorrow and gratitude for the martyrs of July. Featuring the work of renowned photojournalists alongside contributions from NSU students, the exhibition offered a compelling visual timeline of the July Revolution, capturing moments of courage, resilience, and unity.

Following the exhibition, CPS convened the dialogue “*One Year On: Revisiting the Role of Youth and Bangladesh’s Transition Towards Democracy*”, bringing together prominent figures from academia, law, diplomacy, and activism. Dr. M. Jashim Uddin, Director of CPS, delivered the opening remarks and moderated the session, asserting that the spirit of July demands citizens capable of discerning right from wrong, and that non-violence must be the cornerstone of any democratic pursuit to ensure justice and lasting peace.

Professor Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of NSU and chair of the session, highlighted education as the bedrock of national progress and stressed that preserving human dignity is essential to ensure the nation never bows its head. Professor Dr. Asif Nazrul, Honorable



Advisor to the Interim Government and Chief Guest, described the 2024 movement as a decisive turning point in Bangladesh's democratic journey and urged that the revolution be sustained, while challenging global double standards on human rights.

Dr. Bernd Spanier, Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union to Bangladesh and Special Guest, reflected that even modest demands can ignite transformative change, yet lasting impact depends on reshaping political culture. Mrs. Bilkis Zaman, mother of martyred student Tanvin and Guest of Honor, spoke through her grief, imploring that no other mother should bear such loss, and insisting that justice must prevail. Shahidul Alam, acclaimed photographer and activist, observed that in both 1971 and 2024, it was the marginalized who stood at the forefront, and that genuine change must amplify their voices.

In the panel discussion, Dr. Mahdi Amin, advisor to the acting Chairman of BNP, noted that the movement transcended ideological divisions and called for substantive constitutional and administrative reforms. Barrister Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, human rights activist and survivor of *Aynaghor*, emphasized that the ability to speak freely today rests on the sacrifices of thousands of young people, urging that individuals be seen beyond political affiliations. Barrister Asaduzzaman Fuaad, General Secretary of the AB Party, likened the national scene to a tragic theatre performance and questioned whether the movement would ultimately triumph or falter. Advocate Shishir Manir, Supreme Court lawyer, reminded that democracy cannot endure without effective coordination among the judiciary, executive, and legislature. Bobby Hajjaj, political analyst and Chairman of NDM, characterized the movement as a journey of self-realization and praised the youth for their central role in shaping Bangladesh's democratic path.

The event concluded with a resounding call for constitutional reform, judicial independence, active youth engagement, and the preservation of the memory of July 2024—ensuring it remains a guiding light in securing Bangladesh's democratic future.

