

# The Daily Star

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## Conference on Bangladesh begins at Harvard

A two-day conference on “Bangladesh in the 21st century” began at the Centre of Government and International Studies (CGIS) of Harvard University yesterday, according to a message received in Dhaka last night.

The inaugural session of the conference was addressed by Bangladesh Ambassador to USA Humayun Kabir, Director of the Ash Institute Dr Gowher Rizvi, Prof of Harvard Extension School Kazi F Jalal, Vice Chancellor of Brac University Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury and Prof of Black School of Business of the Pennsylvania State University Dr Saad Andaleeb.

Harvard Kennedy School, Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Bangladesh Development Initiative, and Democracy and Development in Bangladesh Forum jointly organised the conference.

A host of Bangladeshi scholars from home and abroad presented papers on various issues pertinent to politics, democracy, economy and growth challenges Bangladesh facing in the 21st century.

Ambassador Farooq Sobhan from BEI and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman chaired two sessions on Bangladesh's foreign policy and foreign relations and democracy and security policy.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury said despite impediments, development of Bangladesh is encouraging in different sectors including poverty alleviation and disaster management. He said during the post-independence period Bangladesh has been able to overcome several critical times. This time also, although through a critical process, Bangladesh will be able to reach its target.

Ambassador Humayun Kabir in his speech said three things-- democracy, technology and globalisation--will control our lives in the 21st century. Ensuring these three things Bangladesh can become a middle income country, he added.

Former secretary Mashiur Rahman and eminent economist and executive director of Brac Mahabub Hossain also spoke, among others.

Many Americans, including representative from US State Department, also attended the conference.

Other distinguished speakers at the conference are Dr Rounaq Jahan from Columbia University and Mamun Rashid, managing director and Citi country officer, Bangladesh.

The conference is being held with support of Citibank, Prime Bank Ltd, American Institute of Bangladesh Studies and MGH group.