

Report
Chattogram Peace Summit 2025
Bridging Divides through Dialogue

6 September 2025, Chittagong Club, Chattogram

1. Introduction

The Chattogram Peace Summit 2025, organized by *Religions for Peace Bangladesh (RPBD)*, convened on 6 September 2025 at the Chittagong Club Terrace Hall. The Summit, held under the theme “*Bridging Divides through Dialogue*”, brought together religious leaders, peace activists, youth representatives, academics, cultural practitioners, journalists, and civil society members to reflect on the urgent need for interfaith understanding, ethical engagement, and sustainable peacebuilding.

Supported by the *Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP)*, the Summit highlighted Bangladesh’s rich tradition of interreligious coexistence and underscored the importance of dialogue, solidarity, and ethical responsibility in addressing national and global challenges.

2. Inaugural Session and Messages from Distinguished Guests

Chief Guest: Dr. Shahadat Hossain, Mayor of Chattogram City Corporation

Delivering the address of the Chief Guest, Mayor Dr. Sahadat Hossain emphasized the indispensable role of interfaith harmony in peacebuilding:

“The message of peace is central to every major faith. There is no alternative to fostering interfaith relationships. Religion should never be a source of competition—it must inspire compassion and understanding.”

He commended RfP Bangladesh for over four decades of dedicated service and highlighted the lead-up initiatives, including the *Poem for Peace*, *Art for Peace*, and *Tree Planting for Peace*, which demonstrate the values of empathy, solidarity, and active civic engagement.

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Dr. Hossain underscored that a peaceful society is built on trust, justice, and shared responsibility, and called on all sectors—faith leaders, youth, and civil society—to collaborate in nurturing these principles.

Distinguished guests:

- Rev. Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara, *Secretary General of RfP Asia*;
- Rev. Dr. Nobuhiro Nemoto, *Special Advisor to RfP Asia*; and
- Professor Dr. John Mathew, *Dean of Asian University for Women*.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Professor Dr. Sukanta Bhattacharjee, *President of RfP Bangladesh (Chattogram)*, moderated the program.
- Principal Sukomal Barua, *President of RfP Bangladesh (Dhaka)*, presented the inaugural address.
- Professor Dr. Masum Ahmed, *Secretary General of RfP Bangladesh (Chattogram)* delivered the welcome address.
- Professor Dr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, *Secretary General of RfP Bangladesh (Dhaka)* offered the vote of thanks.

3. Keynote Address: Professor Dr. Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan

The Summit's keynote, delivered by Professor Dr. Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan, *Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University*, provided an in-depth reflection on ethics, sustainability, and interfaith harmony.

Dr. Ahsan highlighted the Summit as more than a discussion platform; it is an ethical, spiritual, and civic commitment to dialogue, empathy, and action in response to global crises—including wars, forced migrations, economic injustice, and political unrest. Drawing on thinkers such as Desmond Tutu, Immanuel Kant, Holmes Rolston III, and local luminaries like Lalon Shah and Rabindranath Tagore, he emphasized that:

- Peace must be rooted in justice, mutual respect, and ethical responsibility.
- Interfaith dialogue is essential for bridging divides, healing fractured communities, and countering extremism.
- Youth and education are central to cultivating empathy, civic responsibility, and ethical awareness.
- Sustainability and environmental stewardship are inseparable from long-term peace, particularly in Bangladesh, which faces climate and ecological challenges.

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The keynote also highlighted the impact of lead-up activities such as *Tree Planting for Peace*, *Poem for Peace*, and *Art for Peace*, emphasizing that these initiatives are both symbolic and practical demonstrations of ethical engagement and intergenerational collaboration.

4. Message from the ACRP Secretary General: Rev. Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara

Rev. Dr. Shinohara commended Bangladesh for its enduring role in promoting peace, dialogue, and justice in Asia, noting that Bangladesh was among the original chapters establishing ACRP in 1976. He observed:

“The world may be horrified by one conflict after another. In this bleak international climate, messages and actions of trust, dialogue, cooperation, reconciliation, and forgiveness are more necessary than ever. Bangladesh’s religious leaders confronting challenges of violence, discrimination, and poverty provide courage and hope to many.”

He reaffirmed ACRP’s commitment to supporting the solidarity between Bangladesh and Asia’s interfaith communities, emphasizing the critical role of collective moral action in fostering peace and harmony.

5. Panel Discussions and Special Sessions

The Summit’s second session featured interventions from a diverse group of participants, representing religion, culture, civil society, and youth:

Professor Ranjit Kumar Dey, Dr. N.H.M. Abu Bakar, Professor Dr. Rashida Khanam, Ven. Dr. Sanghapriya Mahathero, Professor Dr. Pravat Chandra Barua, social worker Jesmin Sultana Paru, artist Professor Mohd Jasim Uddin, journalist Subhash Chandra Dey, Rev. Father Regan D’Costa, cultural activist Tapas Majumder, theatre artist Swapan Mazumder, banker Rupak Kumar Raskhit, Bidhuth Kanti Nath, poet Biswajit Barua, development activist Dr. Sucharit Neogi, educator Ena Samson, Sanatan Sangha founder Ashok Chakraborty, and youth activist Fatema Abuwala.

In total, nearly 150 delegates from Bangladesh and abroad participated, contributing insights and experiences that enriched the Summit’s discussions on peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue, and civic engagement.

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The Summit was inaugurated with scripture readings by journalist Faruk Taher, Dr. Sreepati Das, Ven. Sharanpal Bhikkhu, and Teresa Irene Gonsalves, and concluded with a prayer led by Rev. Kanchan Barua. Tapu Chowdhury, *peace activist*, anchored the first session.

6. Lead-up Initiatives and Cultural Engagement

Ahead of the Summit, RfP Bangladesh organized several events to foster community engagement and youth participation:

- *Tree Planting for Peace* – symbolic and practical demonstration of environmental stewardship.
- *Poem for Peace* – youth engagement through artistic expression and ethical reflection.
- *Art for Peace* – creative intervention to inspire dialogue and harmony in public spaces.

Additionally, a summit souvenir and the publication “*Guidelines for Peace*” were released to commemorate the event.

7. Summit Statement

At the conclusion of the Chattogram Peace Summit 2025, participants issued the following statement:

“As we conclude the Chattogram Peace Summit 2025, we stand united in our shared commitment to peace, harmony, and interfaith understanding. Differences in faith, culture, and community need not divide us; rather, they enrich our society when met with respect, empathy, and mutual cooperation.

We acknowledge the challenges facing our nation and the world today—from political unrest to social tensions and global conflicts—but we remain steadfast that dialogue, solidarity, and compassionate engagement can build bridges across divides.

Throughout this Summit, we have celebrated collective action, learning from one another, and the dedication of communities committed to peace. We recognize the invaluable contributions of RfP Bangladesh and initiatives such as Poem for Peace, Art for Peace, and Tree Planting for Peace, which nurture hope and harmony in our society. We pledge to continue working together—faith leaders, youth, civil society representatives, and all citizens—to cultivate a culture of understanding, justice, and positive coexistence in Chattogram, Bangladesh, and beyond.

May this Summit serve as a beacon of hope, inspiring ongoing dialogue, reconciliation, and collective action for a peaceful, inclusive, and harmonious future.”

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8. Outcomes and Way Forward

The Chattogram Peace Summit 2025 successfully:

- Reinforced the importance of interfaith dialogue as a tool for peace and social cohesion.
- Highlighted the ethical foundations of sustainable coexistence, rooted in justice, empathy, and shared responsibility.
- Showcased the vital role of youth engagement in civic and ethical leadership.
- Strengthened partnerships between national and international actors, particularly ACRP, in advancing peace initiatives in Bangladesh and the region.
- Committed to continued action through education, civic engagement, cultural initiatives, and interfaith collaboration.

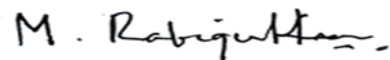
The Summit affirmed that peace is not an abstract ideal but a practical and shared responsibility, encompassing ethical leadership, community action, and global solidarity.

Photo Caption:

Mayor Dr. Sahadat Hossain and Rev. Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara addressing the Chattogram Peace Summit, organized by RfP Bangladesh at Chittagong Club on 6 September 2025.



Professor Dr. Masum Ahmed



Professor Dr. Md Rafiqul Islam