



Dr Fahmida Khatun

Economist, Institutional Leader, Global Development Advisor and Public Intellectual

Dr Fahmida Khatun is one of Bangladesh's leading development economists and a recognised voice on economic policy and sustainable development in the Global South. With more than three and a half decades of experience in economic research and public policy analysis, she has worked extensively with governments, United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, bilateral development partners, public sector financial institutions, research institutions, and the private sector to address complex economic and development challenges.

Dr Khatun is currently a Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). In her role as Distinguished Fellow, Dr Khatun contributes to CPD's research, policy analysis and public engagement. She leads research teams and major research projects, provides intellectual and strategic guidance to research initiatives, and contributes to developing new areas of research and policy work. She mobilises resources and develops partnerships to support CPD's research programmes and institutional priorities. In addition, Dr Khatun engages in national and international policy dialogues, strengthens collaboration with research institutions and development partners, and contributes to mentoring and building the capacity of CPD's researchers.

Dr Khatun served as Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) from February 2017 to August 2026. During her tenure, CPD significantly strengthened its research capacity while expanding the scope, diversity and quality of its research programmes and thematic areas of work. The organisation also broadened and deepened its partnerships with national and international institutions and development partners, enhancing its networks and collaborative engagement. At the same time, CPD strengthened its institutional and resource base, putting the organisation in a stronger position for long-term sustainability.

Under her leadership, CPD further strengthened its institutional capacity through staff development, improved research and publication quality, digitalisation, and the development of its physical and technological infrastructure. These achievements have enabled CPD to broaden its programme portfolio, enhance its human resource capacity, produce high-quality evidence-based research, and deepen policy dialogue with government, parliament, the private sector, civil society, academia, development partners, and the media.

Dr Khatun holds a PhD and an MSc degree in Economics from University College London (UCL), University of London, UK. She also undertook postdoctoral research at Columbia University in the USA and worked with renowned economist and global voice Professor Jeffrey Sachs. She is an alumna of the Leadership Decision-Making Programme at Harvard University, USA.

Her research spans macroeconomic policy, public finance, monetary policy, financial sector governance, trade and development, international development finance, environmental sustainability, climate change, energy, digital public infrastructure, health systems, youth employment, gender empowerment, institutional reform, and the economic transformation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). She is widely recognised for integrating multidisciplinary research with policy practice, helping governments and development partners design effective and forward-looking policy responses to contemporary development challenges.

Prior to joining CPD, Dr Khatun served as a Research Fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and held senior professional positions with UNDP and the USAID Missions. She also taught economics at universities in Bangladesh and the United Kingdom and has been a Visiting Fellow at several research institutions, including the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET), the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), India, and the Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI), Norway.

She previously served as Co-Chair of the T20 India Task Force on Accelerating SDGs: Exploring New Pathways to the 2030 Agenda under the G20 process. She was also a member of the Advisory Team of Connect to Learn, a global education initiative of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York and served as a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C.

Globally, Dr Khatun has been actively engaged in global policy processes and development dialogue. She is a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's Independent Expert

Advisory Panel on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and the High-Level Advisory Board on the Productive Capacities Index of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). She is also a member of Boston University's Task Force on Climate, Development and International Financial Architecture.

At the national level, Dr Khatun has made significant contributions to strengthening public institutions and economic governance in Bangladesh. She serves on the Board of Bangladesh Bank, the country's central bank, and on the Board of BRAC, the world's largest non-governmental development organisation. She is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Government of Bangladesh's Five-Year Strategic Framework (2026–2031), contributing to the country's long-term development strategy. She was a member of the Government's Task Force on Re-Strategising the Economy and Mobilising Resources for Equitable and Sustainable Development and the Task Force to Strengthen the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), both formed by the Interim Government of Bangladesh during 2024–25. She served on the Panel of Economists for Bangladesh's Eighth Five-Year Plan, formed by the Ministry of Planning.

Dr Khatun is invited to deliver lectures at selected top institutes and universities of Bangladesh. She is invited to speak on the macroeconomic situation and budgetary issues before various standing committees of the national parliament of Bangladesh.

Dr Khatun has undertaken research for several international organisations, including the Harvard Business School, Boston University, Commonwealth Secretariat, ODI Global, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), World Resource Institute (WRI), Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Oxfam GB, North-South Institute of Canada, Adelaide University in Australia, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), among others.

Dr Khatun has authored and co-authored numerous books, peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, policy reports, and research papers. Leading international publishers, including Cambridge University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, Springer, and Sage Publications, have published her work.

Beyond academia and policy advisory, Dr Khatun is an influential public intellectual who actively contributes to public discourse on economic and development issues. She is a regular columnist for The Daily Star (<https://www.thedailystar.net/author/dr-fahmida-khatun>), Bangladesh's leading English-language newspaper. She is also a contributor to several national dailies and an invited contributor to the East Asia Forum at the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University (<https://eastasiaforum.org/author/fahmidakhatun/>).

Dr Khatun is a widely respected public commentator on economic and development issues. She regularly provides expert analysis and commentary in national and international media, including BBC World Service Television and Radio, Voice of America, Al Jazeera, and several leading broadcast and digital platforms. Earlier in her career, she regularly contributed to BBC Bangla at the BBC World Service in London. She has also hosted several popular television talk shows on Bangladesh's leading national television channels, facilitating informed public dialogue on contemporary economic and public policy issues.

Beyond her distinguished career as an economist, Dr Fahmida Khatun is a passionate Rabindra Sangeet singer and has released a solo music album. In recognition of her contributions to economic research and public policy, Dr Khatun received the Anannya Shirsho Dosh (Top Ten Outstanding Women) Award in 2009 from Anannya, one of Bangladesh's leading women's magazines.