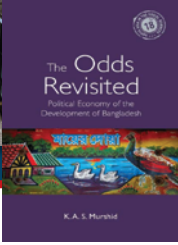




AIBS

NEWSLETTER

February 2024 • Vol 2 • Issue 1



Message from the President

As the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) moves forward, we reflect on the enduring connections between Bangladesh and the United States. Our commitment to fostering scholarly engagement remains steadfast, and we are proud to see AIBS grow as a leading consortium in this domain.

Our upcoming "Bangladesh Conference 2024: Critical Perspectives" at the University of Texas at Austin is a testament to our dedication to multidisciplinary dialogue. This event promises to bring together a diverse group of scholars, showcasing groundbreaking research and fostering a deeper understanding of Bangladesh's socio-political history.

At AIBS, we believe in the power of collaborative research to bridge gaps and create meaningful impacts. The contributions of our colleagues and their dedication to advancing knowledge in various fields continuously inspire us.

As we prepare for the conference and other future endeavors, we are reminded of the importance of our mission. We are committed to nurturing the next generation of scholars and ensuring that the study of Bangladesh remains vibrant and relevant.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our members, partners, and supporters for their continued faith in our mission. Together, we are writing a new chapter in the story of Bangladesh studies.

ALI RIAZ

AIBS 2024 Conference to Take a Critical Look at the Country's Socio-Political Developments

The "Bangladesh Conference 2024: Critical Perspectives," organized by the AIBS in collaboration with the South Asia Institute at the University of Texas at Austin, is set to take place on April 18–19, 2024, at the University of Texas at Austin. The two-day-long conference will host two plenary sessions and 14 panel discussions. More than 50 scholars will attend this in-person conference from around the world.

AIBS President Professor Ali Riaz and the Director of UT Austin's South Asia Institute (SAI), Syed Akbar Hyder, will inaugurate the conference on April 18th. The first plenary session titled "The Future Directions of Bangladesh Studies,"



Professor Elora Shehabuddin



Professor Sayeed Ferdous



Mohammad Sajjadur Rahman



Professor Naeem Mohaiemen

AIBS Plenary Session Speakers

will feature two distinguished scholars of Bangladesh studies, Professor Elora Shehabuddin of the University of California, Berkeley, and Professor Sayeed Ferdous of Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh. Professor Dina M. Siddiqi of New York University will moderate this session.

The second plenary session titled "Bangladesh after 1971," featuring Professor

Who are we?

The American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) serves as a consortium comprising American higher education institutions, with the primary objective of fostering scholarly engagement and deeper understanding between Bangladesh and the United States. It stands as the exclusive umbrella organization within the United States that convenes universities dedicated to research and study related to Bangladesh. Currently, AIBS boasts a membership of 28 universities, and it has established formal cooperative agreements, in the form of memoranda of understanding, with 25 Bangladeshi universities. AIBS is an active member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), a not-for-profit federation comprising 22 independent overseas research centers. AIBS is dedicated to advancing high quality research, particularly in the fields of humanities and social sciences, with a specific focus on societal understanding and interpretation within contemporary contexts.

Join the AIBS Community: Enhancing Bangladesh Studies through Membership Benefits and Opportunities

The American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) invites U.S. higher education institutions and individuals engaged in Bangladesh Studies to join its community. Membership offers numerous benefits, including eligibility for AIBS Fellowships and Travel Grants, with a waived administrative fee for applicants affiliated with AIBS Institutional Members. Individual Members receive regular updates on AIBS programs, newsletters, and other relevant resources, job announcements, and news items. Membership dues directly support AIBS programs, fostering a vibrant academic environment for Bangladesh Studies.

For detailed information on membership benefits and the application process, please visit the AIBS website:
<https://aibs.net/become-a-member/>

Naeem Mohaiemen of Columbia University and PhD researcher Mohammad Sajjadur Rahman of Clark University, will be moderated by Professor Kamran Asdar Ali, of University of Texas Austin.

Farjana Islam's Transformative Journey: From Dhaka to Purdue and Beyond

"Engaging with AIBS has undeniably played a transformative role in shaping my life as a researcher. The fellowship provided invaluable networking opportunities, enhanced my professional development, and granted access to crucial information."

AIBS Fellow Farjana Islam Aovi (2022) Reflects on the Impact of AIBS Professional Development Fellowship.

The American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) Professional Development Fellowship is a cornerstone for scholars, acting as a springboard for their academic and professional advancements. I am honored to be a recipient of this esteemed fellowship in 2022. Eager to broaden my horizons in teaching and research, I pursued an opportunity to observe a U.S. faculty member in action. This led me to Purdue University, Fort Wayne, USA, where Dr. Ahmed Mustafa from the Department of Biology graciously hosted me for a six-week period.

Despite the challenges of traveling from Dhaka to Fort Wayne with my young son, the experience was transformative. The Purdue campus was a remarkable sight, and Dr. Mustafa's mentorship was invaluable. I had the privilege of attending his physiology classes, assisting in lecture preparations, and absorbing his engaging teaching methods. Participating in a class test offered me a firsthand understanding of the American academic system.

The hospitality extended by Dr. Mustafa and his wife, Dr. Qarar, was heartwarming. Their support made my journey smooth and memorable. I also took the opportunity to explore the broader American cultural landscape, visiting Chicago and Indiana, where I experienced museums, theaters, and parks, enriching my understanding of American culture.

This fellowship has been instrumental in shaping my career trajectory. It provided networking opportunities, professional development, and access to a wealth of knowledge and resources. The AIBS community has been a guiding light, offering leadership roles, career guidance, and collaborative research initiatives that have deepened my passion for my field.

The fellowship's impact extends beyond academic enrichment; it fosters a sense of community engagement and offers education and outreach opportunities. I am immensely grateful for the mentorship and guidance received and am committed to being an active, lifelong member of the AIBS community, contributing to the advancement of biological sciences and forging meaningful global research connections.

The AIBS Professional Development



transformative experience, enriching my professional skills and broadening my academic perspectives. It has reinforced my commitment to teaching, research, and community engagement, paving the way for continued contributions to the global research landscape.

AIBS Fellow's Scholarly Activities

AIBS Fellow Sharif Wahab Shares Insights on Rohingya Refugee Crisis at the University of Dhaka

Sharif Wahab, a 2023 AIBS Fellow and Ph.D. candidate from Indiana University Bloomington's Department of Geography, held an engaging session at the University of Dhaka's Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR) on how Cox's Bazar City, Kutupalong refugee camp, and Bhasan Char Island are governing the lives of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. His presentation, stemming from his AIBS-funded dissertation fieldwork, offered insightful revelations about the governance of Rohingya refugees' lives in Cox's Bazar City, Kutupalong refugee camp, and Bhasan Char Island in Bangladesh.



Sharif Wahab speaking at the University of Dhaka's ISWR

Sharif's fieldwork, which combines ethnographic and archival research, sheds light on the political, social, and ecological challenges faced by the host community in Cox's Bazar following the significant influx of Rohingya refugees in 2017. He emphasized the importance of historical context in understanding the geopolitical complexities surrounding the Rohingyas' struggle for citizenship, repatriation efforts, and cross-border human rights issues.

Bushra Nayeem Explores Inclusive Housing Strategies at McGill University Symposium

Bushra Nayeem, AIBS Fellow (2022), shared her expertise at the McGill University symposium on the Minimum Cost Housing Group in Montreal, Quebec. Held from October 19-20, 2023, the symposium was a central feature of the exhibition 'Design for the Global Majority'. It commemorated fifty years of the Minimum Cost Housing Group's groundbreaking work in addressing global human settlement challenges.



Bushra Nayeem

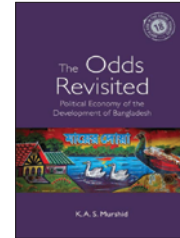
New Books on Bangladesh Studies

The Odds Revisited: Political Economy of the Development of Bangladesh

Author: K. A. S. Murshid, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Year: 2023



The book provides a detailed analysis of Bangladesh's development over the past fifty years, examining key sectors, sub-sectors, and macro levels and challenges the notion

that the 'Bangladesh surprise' is solely due to the 1971 war or women's empowerment.

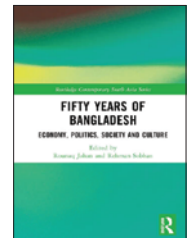
Fifty Years of Bangladesh Economy, Politics, Society and Culture

Editors: Rounaq Jahan, Rehman Sobhan

Publisher: Routledge

Year: 2024

"Fifty Years of Bangladesh" is a comprehensive study presenting new empirical data and critical analysis of Bangladesh's socio-economic



transformation, political history, and cultural landscapes. The book offers multidisciplinary insights into the country's paradoxical development, exploring economic and social changes, political dynamics, and cultural shifts over the past five decades.

Transforming Bangladesh: Geography, People, Economy, and Environment

Editor: Raquib Ahmed, Abdullah Al-Maruf, J. Craig Jenkins

Publisher: Springer

Year: 2023



This book analyzes Bangladesh's rapid transition from a rural, agrarian economy to a significant contributor in global processes, highlighting its environmental

Nayeem's presentation delved into the group's innovative research in housing, emphasizing the urgent need for inclusive strategies to meet the housing requirements of marginalized communities. She highlighted the group's unique pedagogical approach, which involved a deep analysis of the complex challenges in slums, viewing these issues as sources of knowledge that can lead to effective technological and policy solutions.

Samira Bashar Illuminates Urban Planning and Environmental Justice with Lectures and Conference Presentations

AIBS Fellow Samira Bashar (2024) was engaged in a series of scholarly activities, including delivering insightful lectures at The University of Texas at Austin and Smith College, Massachusetts. Her talks, themed "Right to the Waterscape and Decolonizing Planning," focused on critical environmental justice issues and the decolonization of urban planning processes. These lectures, part of undergraduate and seminar classes, emphasized the importance of understanding historical contexts in social science research.



Samira Bashar presenting her paper at the School of Planning in Chicago

Samira Bashar also presented her MA thesis findings titled "Suppressing Rights and Needs with Concrete": Planning as a Biopolitical Tool in Rohingya Refugee Camps in Bangladesh," which was held at a planning conference in Chicago, October 19-21, 2023.

Mania Taher joins the advisory committee for the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)

AIBS Fellow Mania Taher (2024) has been selected as a member of the graduate student advisory committee for the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) for the 2023-2024 academic year. In this role, Mania will be organizing a panel titled "Capitalist World Making" as part of the Graduate Student Lightning Talk session at the upcoming 2024 SAH conference in Albuquerque.

Mania has also been awarded the prestigious Sally Kress Tompkins Fellowship, which is a collaborative effort between the Society of Architectural Historians and the Historic American Buildings Survey. The fellowship recognizes Mania's potential and dedication to the field of architectural history. Under the aegis of this fellowship, Mania will embark on a project to study and document the Dearborn Mosque in Dearborn, MI, the second oldest mosque in the United States, during the summer.

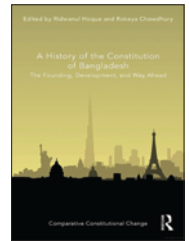
vulnerabilities and opportunities amidst this transformation. It provides an in-depth understanding of Bangladesh's geography and environment, addressing challenges like climate change, urbanization, and resource sustainability, essential for academics and professionals studying environmental and geographical dynamics in rapidly evolving countries.

A History of the Constitution of Bangladesh: The Founding, Development, and Way Ahead

Editors: Ridwanul Hoque, Rokeya Chowdhury

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

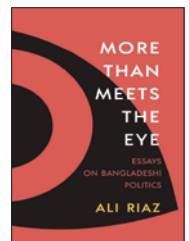
Year: 2023



This book critically assesses the evolution of Bangladesh's Constitution over fifty years, examining its foundational aspirations, performance, and contemporary challenges. It presents a diverse array of perspectives on the interaction between the people, political entities, and legal institutions in shaping the Constitution, offering a comprehensive view of Bangladesh's constitutional journey and its future prospects.

Ali Riaz's book endorsed by The Economist as a "must read" about Bangladesh

Ali Riaz's book *More Than Meets the Eye: Essays on Bangladeshi Politics* (Dhaka: UPL, 2023), endorsed as an essential reading by



The Economist, dissects the erosion of democracy and social-political institutions in Bangladesh over 15 years. Through nine essays, Riaz delves into the country's tumultuous politics post-1990, the rise of political Islam, and the geostrategic rivalry between India and China. The book particularly scrutinizes Bangladesh's strained relations with India and the implications for its geopolitical significance, offering insights into the country's future trajectory.

Awards

Md Muhibbur Rahman awarded with the prestigious Humane Studies Fellowship

AIBS Fellow Md Muhibbur Rahman (2022) has been awarded the prestigious Humane Studies Fellowship from the Institute of Humane Studies at George Mason University. Supported by the Marcus Foundation, the fellowship, was granted to Muhibbur in October 2023 to support his research titled "The Perils of Ethnonationalist Advantage in Foreign Policy: Experimental Evidence from Post-Colonial Countries."

Tazreena Sajjad received 2024 Spring University of Glasgow Fellowship

AIBS Fellow Tazreena Sajjad (2022) has received the prestigious 2024 Spring University of Glasgow Fellowship, enabling her to further her research on the Bhasan Char project. This fellowship recognizes Sajjad's exceptional work and commitment to her field, providing her with the resources and platform to deepen her investigation into this critical area of study.

AIBS Fellowships News

AIBS has announced its annual fellowships for Bangladeshi citizens:

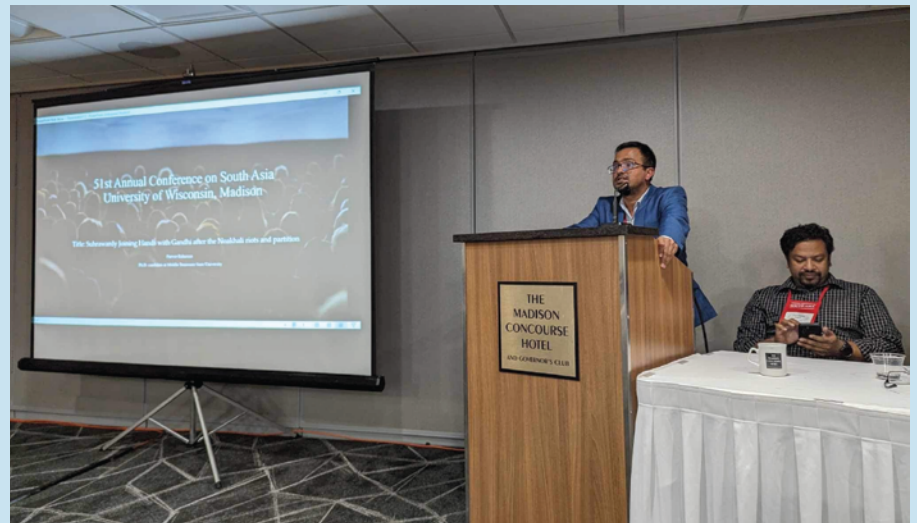
i. AIBS Bangladeshi Graduate Student Fellowship

The American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) has recently announced research fellowships for Bangladeshi graduate students studying in the U.S. for the academic year 2023-2024. These fellowships aim to support Ph.D. and Master's students in meeting expenses related to scholarly research and creative projects in Bangladesh.

The application deadline is set for Sunday, March 10, 2024, at 11:59 pm U.S. Eastern Time. Eligible applicants include Bangladeshi citizens who are currently enrolled in Ph.D., MA, MS, or MFA programs at U.S.-based institutions. Research projects from a broad range of disciplines, including Humanities and Sciences, Social Sciences, Education and Public Health, Music and Fine Arts, Social Policies and Management, and other relevant fields, are encouraged.

Parvez Rahaman Explores Suhrawardy and Gandhi's Alliance Post-Noakhali Riots at South Asian Conference

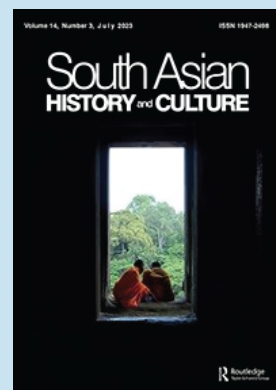
AIBS Fellow Parvez Rahaman (2024) presented his dissertation chapter titled "Suhrawardy Joining Hands with Gandhi after the Noakhali Riots in 1946" at the 2023 South Asian Conference in Madison. Rahaman's research offers a nuanced exploration of the complex relationship between Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, the then Muslim League leader and Chief Minister of Bengal, and Mahatma Gandhi in the aftermath of the Noakhali riots in 1946. Rahaman's paper delves into how Suhrawardy, influenced by Gandhi's philosophies, sought to restore confidence among the minority communities in divided Bengal and foster amicable Hindu-Muslim relations. Rahaman's study contributes to a deeper understanding of the historical dynamics between these two prominent South Asian leaders and their impact on Hindu-Muslim unity in the region.



Parvez Rahaman presenting at the South Asia conference in Madison, Wisconsin

Melia Belli Bose Highlights Gender, Labor, and Textiles in South Asian Art

AIBS Fellow Melia Belli Bose (2023) has edited a special edition of the journal *South Asian History and Culture*, focusing on gender, labor, and textiles/fashion in South Asia. In this edition, Bose's article, "Uncomfortable quilts: textile-based activism in response to Bangladeshi garment factory disasters," examines the response of four visual artists to the tragic garment factory disasters in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her essay examines how these artists use their work to highlight the human cost of 'fast fashion', addressing themes of globalization, gendered labor exploitation, and the importance of empathy.



Melia Bose has also published a book chapter titled, "The Razor's Edge: Gender Politics and Structural Violence in the Work of Bangladeshi Artist Tayeba Begum Lipi." This chapter is part of the collection *Women across Asian Art: Selected Essays in Art and Material Culture*, edited by Ling-en Lu and Allysa B. Peyton and published by the University Press of Florida. In this insightful chapter, Melia Bose explores the intersection of gender politics and structural violence in Tayeba Begum Lipi's artwork, offering an insightful analysis of contemporary art in South Asia.

To be considered for this fellowship, graduate students should be in the advanced stages of their programs. Those who have previously applied for the fellowship but did not receive an award are welcome to reapply.

The maximum award amount is \$3,000, and the funds must be utilized before September 30, 2025. Recipients are required to report to the AIBS Dhaka office in Bangladesh and plan a research outreach event with an AIBS partner university at the end of their research trip. The fellowship will cover expenses related to the research project in Bangladesh.

Applications will be evaluated based on the project's impact, significance, innovative approach, and feasibility. A crucial component of the application is a letter of recommendation from the student's faculty advisor, discussing the project's feasibility and contribution to the student's academic progress.

ii. AIBS Professional Development Fellowships for Bangladeshi Scholars

AIBS has also announced the new round of Professional Development Fellowship for Bangladeshi scholars. This program offers a unique opportunity for scholars working at AIBS partner universities in Bangladesh to collaborate with U.S. faculty members, enhance their research skills, and gain experience in academic writing and publication.

Applications are open until Sunday, March 10, 2024, at 11:59 pm U.S. Eastern Time. Eligible candidates include Bangladeshi citizens currently employed at one of the AIBS partner universities in Bangladesh. A key requirement for the application is a letter of invitation from a U.S. faculty member.

The fellowship, ranging from \$4,000 to \$5,000, is designed for a six-week duration and must be utilized before September 30, 2025. It will cover professional development expenses such as travel, lodging, food, and educational materials.

To apply, applicants must submit an online form detailing their goals, outcomes, and timeline for the visit (max 500 words), a recent CV, and a letter of invitation outlining additional campus resources and plans for a public event showcasing the scholar's work.

Rabiul Islam's Study Sheds Light on the Socio-Economic Impact of Foreign Remittances in Rural Bangladesh

AIBS Fellow Rabiul Islam's (2022) has completed a study on the critical influence of foreign remittances in transforming the socio-economic landscape for families of international migrant workers in rural Bangladesh. The research, focusing on workers in Malaysia, explores the utilization of remittances and the various channels families use, including land transactions and loans, to finance migration. The study highlights the risks faced by workers, including exploitation by unscrupulous agents.

Kajalie Shehreen Islam Explored Bangladeshi Youth Engagement in Social Media

AIBS Fellow Kajalie Shehreen Islam (2022) has recently published her paper titled "Gendered Political Communication: A Study of the Coverage of Women Politicians in the Bangladeshi Press," in the *Social Science Review* (vol.39, issue. 3)). Kajalie Islam probes into the gendered portrayal of female politicians in Bangladeshi media. Utilizing framing and discourse analysis, along with interviews of women Members of Parliament, her paper reveals how women politicians are often framed in relation to male mentors and perceived as inexperienced or only representative of women voters.

Kajalie Islam also presented a paper at the "International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) 2023" conference held at the University of Lyon in July 2023. Titled "The Rohingya Conflict in the Media: Discourses and silences around sexual violence," her work critically examines the media coverage of sexual violence against the Rohingyas across Burmese, Bangladeshi, and US media. The paper's discourse analysis offers insights into how the media frames victims-survivors of sexual violence in conflict, exploring its implications for international politics and justice.

Md Muhibbur Rahman published in Foreign Policy Analysis



Muhibbur Rahman

AIBS Fellow Md Muhibbur Rahman (2022) has published an article titled "The Political Economy of Peacekeeping: Civil-Military Resource Substitution through International Brokerage," at *Foreign Policy Analysis*. Muhibbur's two other papers have been accepted for presentation at the International Studies Association (ISA) and the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) in 2024.

Mohammad Tareq Hasan Explores Labor Rights and Dispossession in Bangladeshi Garment Factories

AIBS Fellow Mohammad Tareq Hasan (2024) has published a chapter titled "Moral Jeopardies and Exorcisms in the Global Production Network: Auditing, CSR, and 'New' Dispossession in a Bangladeshi Garment Factory" in the edited volume *Morality as Organizational Practice: Negotiating, Performing, and Navigating Moral Standards in Contexts of Work*. The chapter focuses on the aftermath of tragic accidents in the garment industry, highlighting the implementation of factory compliance principles driven by global buyers' ethical labor codes. Hasan critically examines these initiatives, often labeled as 'exorcisms' for humane capitalism, and their interplay with factory auditing, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and labor laws.

He argues that while these measures serve capital accumulation and promise long-term growth, they exacerbate the existing crisis and intensify dispossession against workers. The volume is edited by Sarah May, Stefan Groth, and Johannes Müske, and published by Waxmann Verlag GmbH.

Shanawez Hossain sheds light on integrating Inclusivity in urban planning to achieve the SDGs

Md Shanawez Hossain, Assistant Professor of Global Studies & Governance at Independent University, Bangladesh, and an AIBS Professional Development Fellow (2023), delivered a keynote address at an event organized by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The event, held on October 18, 2023, at the Brac Center, Dhaka, focused on "The citizen's agenda for inclusive development and fairness." Hossain's presentation, titled "Providing public utilities and services in the backdrop of unplanned urbanization," highlighted the challenges posed by unplanned urbanization in Bangladesh.



Shanawez Hossain speaking at the Citizen's Platform for SDGs in Dhaka

In his address, Hossain shed light on the substantial investments in urban development over the last decade but pointed out their lack of inclusivity, safety, and resilience. He emphasized the diminished quality of life in Bangladeshi cities, referencing global indicators that rank them among the least livable. Hossain advocated for a shift from ad-hoc solutions to comprehensive master planning, underscoring the need to strengthen local government institutions, amend laws and policies, and ensure the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into urban planning.

Marshall Azad Examines Elder Care and Domestic Servitude Dynamics in Recent Feminist Studies Publication



Marshall Azad

Marshall Azad, a former AIBS Bangla Language Fellow, has published a thought-provoking paper in *Feminist Studies'* special issue on autotheory. Titled "Serving the Aging: Navigating Elder Care, Domestic Servitude, and Crisis in a Home Away from Home," the article, featured in the December 2023 issue, explores the complex dynamics of elder care and domestic servitude in Dhaka. Through a personal narrative, Azad examines the unsustainable workload of domestic workers, the undervaluation of their labor, and its link to the broader global care crisis. The paper urges the Bangladeshi middle class to reconsider their dependence on domestic labor for care needs, highlighting a critical moment for societal introspection.

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