



# PROCEEDINGS

**Book Launching Seminar  
on**

## **Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas**

**Tuesday, 02 April 2024**

**Organised by**

**Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)**







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**Book Launching Seminar  
on**

## **Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas**



**Publications Officer**

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)

1/46, Old Elephant Road (West of Ramna Police Station)

Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

Phone: (880-2) PABX: 48315808, 222223808, Ext. 136

Fax: (880-2) 48312625, e-mail: [po@biiss.org](mailto:po@biiss.org)

Website: [www.biiss.org](http://www.biiss.org)

**Designed & Printed by**

nymphaea

Hashim Tower, Suite 6C, 6th Floor

205/1/A, Tejgaon–Gulshan Link Road, Dhaka 1208

Phone: +88 02 222262032, +88 02 222262054

E-mail: [info@nymphaea-bd.com](mailto:info@nymphaea-bd.com)

Website: [www.nymphaea-bd.com](http://www.nymphaea-bd.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organised a Book Launching Seminar on “Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas”, on 02 April, Thursday, 2024 at BIISS auditorium. **H E Ms Waseqa Ayesha Khan, MP**, State Minister, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, graced the event as the Chief Guest. Director General of BIISS, **Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan, ndc, afwc, psc, G+** delivered the welcome address. **Dr Razia Sultana**, Senior Research Fellow, BIISS and lead author of the book introduced the book to the audience. **Mr Md Rafid Abrar Miah**, Research Officer, BIISS, another co-author, presented the major findings of the book. **Professor Dr Delwar Hossain**, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka and Member, Bangladesh Public Service Commission and **Shaikh Muhammad Mehedi Ahsan**, Country Representative, IUCN, Bangladesh and General Secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), one of the authors, were the discussants on the book. The session was chaired by **Ambassador AFM Gousal Azam Sarker**, Chairman, BIISS.

Senior officials from different ministries, senior military officials both serving and retired, members of the diplomatic community, former ambassadors, media representatives, academia, researchers, faculties and students from various universities, the business community and representatives from international organisations participated in the book launching ceremony.



## WELCOME ADDRESS



### **Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan, ndc, afwc, psc, G+**

*Director General, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS)*

**Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan, ndc, afwc, psc, G+**, the Director General of BISS extended his warm greetings to the audience on behalf of the institute and welcomed everyone to the Book Launching seminar. He also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the honourable Chief Guest for her gracious presence at the event. The Director General paid his solemn reverence to the memory of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and his family

members along with three million martyrs who laid down their lives for the liberation of Bangladesh. He also expressed his utmost tribute to the memory of all the freedom fighters for their supreme contribution to Bangladesh's independence struggle.

The Director General shared that this event was to celebrate the dedication and hard work of ten authors whose dedicated literary work discussed and explored a truly remarkable project, the Padma Multipurpose Bridge (PMB). The pages of the book 'Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas,' shed light on one of the most significant infrastructure endeavours of Bangladesh. The Padma Bridge project stands as a symbol of innovation, perseverance, and collective effort. It represents not just the physical connection between two points but also the bridging of communities, ideas, and aspirations.

At this stage, the Director General introduced the creative and brilliant minds behind the book: Dr Razia Sultana, Senior Research Fellow, BISS; Research Officers of BISS, Md Rafid Abrar Miah, Nahian Reza Sabriet, Md Nahiyen Shajid Khan, and a team of researchers from Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) led by S M Mehedi Ahsan, the General Secretary of the Institute. Their cumulative and relentless efforts brought the book into reality. This book explored the depths of the project and embarked on a journey of understanding, appreciation, and reflection on the effects of Padma Bridge.





Major General Md Abu Bakar Siddique Khan shared that the book ‘Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas,’ narrates the remarkable journey of economic emancipation, growth, and development. Through the pages of this book, the readers are invited to witness the challenges faced, the triumphs achieved, and the lessons learned throughout the journey of bringing the Padma Bridge to reality. It serves not only as a historical record but also as a testament to human ingenuity and determination. The book examines the positive impacts of constructing a bridge and implementing a resettlement strategy addressing multiple facets of people’s lives, such as livelihoods, healthcare, communication, and education. The book emphasises the efforts made by PMB authorities to enhance human security, encompassing economic, health, and environmental aspects. The book also emphasises the connection between development and human security, specifically focusing on the evolution of the PMB project into a durable mechanism that supports long-term social development through infrastructure and safety nets. It explores the comprehensive environmental strategies adopted to mitigate adverse effects and also emphasises the significance of environmental management and biodiversity in Bangladesh.

At the end of his deliberation, the Director General extended his sincere gratitude to the authors of the book for their dedication in documenting the monumental literary work and for providing

readers the opportunity to gain insights into its intricacies. He also expressed his gratitude to the learned audience for inspiring the faculty members with their kind participation and presence.





## INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK



### **Dr Razia Sultana**

*Senior Research Fellow*

*Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS)*

**Dr Razia Sultana**, Senior Research Fellow of BISS, said that the year 2023 is considered as the year of megaprojects for Bangladesh. Among all the megaprojects, PMB is one of the finest and most magnificent landmark development activities and it has been a remarkable addition to the country's 53 years of development journey. She informed the audience that initially, fund management and associated national and international debacles posed crucial challenges

for the government to continue this project but after overcoming all the hurdles, the 6.15 km bridge symbolises the national strength and unwavering commitment of the government towards continuous progress of the country. This is the maiden project that Bangladesh has completed with its own funds. Keeping these spirits in mind, this book is an example of a success story of a development project which is an important means of boosting the economy in 21 districts of southwest Bangladesh.

Regarding the book, Dr Razia said that the authors have highlighted in the book that megaprojects can be a crucial vehicle for advancing Bangladesh's economy, especially if the management of the project is accomplished properly and international standards are maintained. This bridge is not merely a physical structure. Especially, if one looks at current foreign policy trends, two key priority areas can be found: one is development and another is peace, security, and tranquillity of the country. The key argument of the book is that development and human security are closely connected and without development, human security could not be ensured.

Dr Razia added that, throughout the book, the authors tried to explore how this megaproject has affected various development and human security issues in resettlement areas of three districts (Munshiganj, Shariatpur and Madaripur). By deploying a mixed-method technique, the authors tried to identify how these concerns have been ensured at local and national levels. There is a widespread understanding that development projects not only generate winners but also losers. Because though such kinds of projects improve many people's lives and livelihoods, these, on the other hand, create an apprehension of generating forced displacement followed by loss of livelihood. It puts those



people into dire misery. But PMB has disproved the idea by maintaining the international standard and has set an excellent example of resettling the Project Affected Persons (PAPs).

Dr Razia believes that in all sincerity, Bangladesh's national aspirations and dreams are getting bigger as it hopes to be a sustainable and poverty-free country by 2030 and a developed nation by 2041. PMB represents the realization of Bangladesh's collective aspirations and dreams for the future. To effectively fulfil its ambitions, Bangladesh has to make some concerted efforts. To guide its national aspiration effectively, in this book, the authors provided some policy suggestions for policymakers, development practitioners and other like-minded professionals.

In conclusion, the lead author encourages everyone to go through this book because this book represents the monumental and groundbreaking success PMB has brought for Bangladesh and the discussions presented in the book can serve as a valuable model for future similar projects in the country and beyond.



## MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE BOOK



### **Md Rafid Abrar Miah**

*Research Officer*

*Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)*

**Md Rafid Abrar Miah**, Research Officer of BIISS at the very outset thanked the chief guest, panelists, and other audience present and informed them that he will specifically present the major findings of the Book. While talking about the major findings, he at first, informed the audience that it is seen in the past that whenever any large-scale infrastructural development project gets implemented in any land scarce developing countries, local inhabitants suffer. In the case of the Padma Bridge Megaproject, this research

wanted to see the condition of the 'Project Affected Persons' from the lens of sustainability. To examine sustainability, three aspects i.e., economic, social, and environmental are looked into. Mr Abrar discussed only the economic and social dimension in his presentation.

Mr Abrar informed the audience that the first and most pressing issue in this regard was the abolishment of ghat-centric businesses. Before PMB, Mawa was one of the busiest junctions for both visitors and passengers. For many years, local people have been engaged in a number of income-generating activities (IGA) which are temporary and informal in nature. When the construction started, 3012 families had to sacrifice their residence and livelihoods.

Regarding their restoration of livelihood, Mr Abrar said that the government provided training to the resettled people and the types of training were selected after some thorough consultations with those Project Affected Persons (PAPs). Altogether, 20 types of training were proposed by the PAPs but because of the smaller number of participants in each, 14 were selected. In these trainings, both male and females have participated and it contributed to ensuring gender balance in this regard. Moreover, the training participants have received 500 taka per day for participating in those training sessions. The duration of each training varied from 30 to 120 days based on its nature and scope. After receiving the training, the government helped them to establish businesses, get a driving license, or provided a loan up to 2 lakh BDT from the youth development authority. If more money is required, bank loans are being managed for them. For him, it's a holistic ecosystem that has been established for the PAPs to earn better and live better.



About the outcome of these training sessions, Mr Abrar informed that around 42% people reported that their income has increased and for around 67% of people, it is within the comfortable range. Regarding the economic impact in the Shariatpur district, he commented that the pattern of impact is different since people of Shariatpur are neither resettled nor trained but enjoyed a spill-over effect. Because of better connectivity, there is an increase in the number of people's movement in Shariatpur and it increases the selling of products ranging from medicines to foods to construction materials significantly. From a macro point of view, Mr Abrar said that during the Eid and other festive times, lots of perishable goods used to get destroyed and cows coming from the southern part of the country used to succumb to death because of the long waiting time. This bridge has resolved this problem quite completely. This is a major addition for the businessmen who are involved in these sectors, he argued.

In this scenario, Mr Abrar argued that one challenge has emerged for some of the local businesses. He said, because of better connectivity, people of Shariatpur are intended to perform cloth and jewellery shopping from Dhaka now instead of Shariatpur. This has caused some dissatisfaction among the local businessmen but he considers this as a structural change and the nature of the businesses needs to be adaptive based on the changed context.

At that juncture, he talked about the social dimensions, where Mr Abrar argued that the changes are even greater. The resettlement sites where PAPs are currently living now offer a far better livelihood than they had earlier. Their accommodation, access to healthcare, access to education, living arrangements inside the resettlement sites, all have improved quite significantly. Regarding



the effect of education among the PAPs, one thing he noticed is that the access to secondary or higher secondary level education has remained unchanged where the government can play a role.

About the health sector, Mr Abrar said that the access to pathological services and medicines has increased by 90% among the PAPs since they had the nearest healthcare provider around 20 to 25 km away from their earlier place of living. Now because of the Resettlement Sites, they have a medical centre with a doctor at their doorstep. But the magnitude of increasing ambulances is low, and for radiological services it is lower. It's because there are no ambulances in the medical centres and no such radiological services. However, whatever they currently have, is something much more than they had earlier, he argued. From the field experience, he found that these people have seen cases like people who died, pregnant mothers delivered or even died while taking them to the nearest medical complex. These sorts of emergencies have been addressed excellently by the government. Drawing from these experiences, Mr Abrar highlighted some aspects.

1. Higher Secondary Education Facilities can be increased.
2. One ambulance for each RS can be provided. In addition, Radiological services and indoor patient facilities can be introduced.
3. The local connectivity aspect needs to be addressed as the people of Jajira and Mawa faces difficulties crossing the bridge now. It needs to be addressed.
4. Local Transport Laborers are facing hard times since inter-district buses are now reaching the very upazilas and unions of Shariatpur district. As such, local buses are not getting adequate passengers. This problem to be looked into.



5. River-centric Tourism and Eco-tourism can be planned.
6. Proper Environmental Management is also subject to be considered. He assured the audience that it was not done badly, but it is always possible to make it better. Thus, he requested the authority to keep up working for the betterment.

In conclusion, Mr Abrar said that the example Government of Bangladesh has set in terms of resettlement of the PAPs, is one of its kind and to his word, is a 'textbook example' for sustainable, and inclusive resettlement plan. Any country, especially the land scarce and densely populated countries like Bangladesh can learn a lot from this model and this is worth replicating.





## DISCUSSION ON THE BOOK



### Dr Delwar Hossain

*Professor of International Relations, University of Dhaka*

*And*

*Member, Bangladesh Public Service Commission*

**Professor Dr Delwar Hossain** congratulated BISS for publishing the book and thanked BISS for making him a part of it as he has written the foreword. He mentioned that the book is about the Padma Bridge, and it has a very specific focus on the resettlement of the people who have been affected. He mentioned that it is a bridge of national pride and this bridge is a miracle because it is not only just a megaproject, it is a megaproject that was built by the fund and resources

from Bangladesh from its own sources. And it is the bridge that has a history, as at some point in time, the World Bank, which was the major financier of the bridge, had withdrawn from financing.

So, when the World Bank withdrew, Bangladesh took a challenge under the leadership of the honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He referred to the leadership of Bangladesh under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who actually took the challenge of constructing the bridge. The bridge has a history in the sense that in the 1970 election manifesto when Bangladesh was under Pakistan, even during that time, the constructing of a Bridge on the Padma River was referred to. The Padma is a mighty river and it is the river after the Amazon, which has waves that are very forceful, but Bangabandhu dreamt of constructing a Bridge even in 1970 and then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu, who uttered about constructing the Bridge when she was visiting Japan in 1997.

Subsequently, in 1999, Japan started a feasibility study of the Padma Bridge. He mentioned that the history of the actual withdrawal of the World Bank is also very important as the reason why the World Bank withdrew had also proved false.

Dr Hossain referred to the remarks of Honourable Prime Minister in the National Parliament in 2012 when the World Bank withdrew from the project, “we have won the country through a nine-month long battle; the people of Bangladesh do not know how to bow down to anyone. I’m optimistic, I’m confident.” She also mentioned that they want us to beg and want us to continue as guinea pigs. So,



we will go ahead with this project using our own resources, that was her determination, that was her courage that was reflected through this bridge and when she inaugurated the bridge in June 2022. The Prime Minister had mentioned that the Padma Bridge has been completed, Bangladesh's economy has not collapsed and the country is moving forward at a breakneck pace. Dr Hossain said that it has been proven to the world what Bangladesh can do and that is very important that the bridge reflects the national capability.

The Bridge reflects what Bangladesh can do from different aspects, so it is not simply a megaproject, rather it is a Bridge that actually has contributed enormously to economic development. Moreover, it demonstrates the capacity and the prospect of a new Bangladesh. The Bridge has implications for economic development and diplomacy as it was a challenge to the World Bank. After the construction of the Bridge and its opening, it is very interesting to know how Bangladesh's development friends from different parts of the world reacted to the opening of the Bridge. Dr Hossain referred to the statement by the US Embassy. According to the US Embassy, the Padma Bridge will create new and important linkages within Bangladesh boasting commerce and improving the quality of life, it is also another example of Bangladesh's leadership in promoting regional connectivity in South Asia. Referring to India, Dr Hossain said that the Indian High Commission mentioned that the Padma Bridge would not only have improved intra-Bangladesh connectivity, it would also provide much-needed impetus to logistics businesses connecting India and the shared sub-region. The Austrian High Commission very rightly said that the Padma Bridge is a major achievement for and by Bangladesh and all of Bangladesh should be proud of it.



Dr Hossain also shared Norway's statement "The dream of millions has been fulfilled, congratulations, Bangladesh." He argued that this incredible achievement will open a new chapter of growth, connectivity and development of the country. Dr Hossain emphasised that the Padma Bridge is not only a project or accomplishment of economic importance or importance related to connectivity, but it also has implications for our diplomacy and for our foreign policy. Dr Hossain mentioned that he has written the foreword and has read the book.

In Bangladesh not much is written about infrastructure and about such kind of accomplishment from a social science perspective. He thinks that the book is extremely important, and it has a unique theme. The theme is seen in the title, "Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas'. The book has a strong theoretical engagement to understand different fundamentals like human security, development, megaprojects and resettlement. These are very important variables which are dealt with within this book from different theoretical perspectives and this theoretical analysis has been very profound and very robust. Another very strong and positive point about the book is that it follows a methodology of mixed methods and primarily depends on fieldwork and field surveys. The researchers went to the field and talked to the common people through different interviews, so the methodology has clear objectives, and it has research questions, and the field-level surveys are a strong point about the methodology.

Dr Hossain also mentioned that the book refuted the critics of such kinds of megaprojects. It is not only in Bangladesh, but also in different parts of the world and particularly the developing



world is facing this problem. When the Western world constructed such a kind of megaproject there was none to talk about environmental consequences, problems of displacement, problems of resettlement, all because they did it 50 years 100 years back. Hence, no one talks about human rights and environmental issues. But in contemporary time, if one does anything s/he has to think about its impact on the people, its impact on the environment. He thinks that this book has given a very befitting answer to the critics because the book has detailed the people who were affected and how they were treated by the government to resettle to rehabilitate them.

Dr Hossain further said that it is a micro-level study on the people who are affected by this project or by this bridge. Eventually, it has been shown that the micro-level issues had been dealt with properly and then this megaproject is benefiting not only Bangladesh but also the entire region both from a connectivity, investment, and trade point of view. He said that the book is extremely important, and it is research work that academic policy makers and students can consult.

He also said that there is a need for more such works and not only just about these people who are affected but how this is actually contributing to Bangladesh's economy because when the Bridge was opened, people made predictions about the increase of our GDP by 1.23%. The people talked about the change of fate of 29 districts, of which 21 districts of southwestern part of Bangladesh and this is happening. The Bridge has already passed the milestone of collecting tolls of TK 1000 crore in September 2023. Dr Hossain thanked BISS for taking the research project and engaging their scholars to write the book.

In conclusion, Dr Hossain added that the book could have added one or two chapters on the background of this Bridge because it was a challenge. It was not simply a megaproject, as there was a dream here, there was an idea to promote. Leadership was involved, courage was involved, vision was involved.





**Mr Shaikh Muhammad Mehedi Ahsan**

*Country Representative, IUCN and General  
Secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP)*

**Mr Shaikh Muhammad Mehedi Ahsan** began his deliberation by sharing a personal story. He shared that he was a direct beneficiary of the Padma Bridge because he lives in the southwestern part of Bangladesh. In 2009, he used to travel to his village through Aricha Ghat. When his father died in 2009, he had to wait five hours on the other side of Aricha Ghat. But a week earlier, when he visited his village, it took only a total of five to six hours to reach. So individually, he is a beneficiary. Collectively, the nation is beneficiary of this bridge, and it is really a matter of pride as it is in the map. Now that the bridge is

there, it is important to ask what is next? As a nation, that needs to be thought about.

At this stage of the deliberation, Mr Ahsan took the opportunity to introduce the Bangladesh Institute of Planners as they are a proud part of this journey. Bangladesh Institute of Planners is a professional organisation of urban, regional, and rural planners of the country. At the moment, seven public universities are producing planners. This national professional institute was established almost 50 years ago. However, unfortunately, the country is not progressing from urban and regional planning point of view. Mr Ahsan shared his interest to engage with all different stakeholders, including BISS. On behalf of the organisation, he is interested in reaching out to all the stakeholders with the mission and vision to highlight the importance of planned urbanisation and planned development of the country.

Mr Ahsan shared that the planners contributed in chapters 4 and 6 of the book. There, the focus has been on development impact as well as environmental consequences. They used satellite images as well as some geographical databases to do the analysis. It can be seen that in the district town, growth centre, economic zone, ports i.e., Mongla Port, Benapole, Payra Port etc., the distance as well as the travel time with Dhaka reduced. It has a huge impact on the economy and the changes are happening very rapidly. With these changes taking place, the land price from both sides of the river as well as both sides of the road has been changing rapidly. Satellite image analysis shows that around 50 per cent land is still agriculture land, and around 22 per cent land is forest land because the Sundarbans is there. Bangladesh cannot afford to reduce agriculture land as a whole because ecologically it is a very important part. Bangladesh needs to feed this generation and the next generation. So, it is also important to present a pleasant, sustainable environment for the current and next generation. But at the moment, the development is taking place very rapidly. In this context, he wanted to offer specific recommendations. He stated that the whole region and the



impact zone of the Padma Bridge need a spatial planning system. It needs to be developed and introduced in a systematic and planned manner. He also suggested that every single union, every single upazila or the region need spatial planning. This planning system has to be developed and implemented. Otherwise, the harmony of this whole region cannot be protected or sustained.

Mr Ahsan added that the Padma Bridge is a gift from the political leadership to the nation. If this gift cannot be used systematically, if the impact zone and the whole ecology of coastal Bangladesh cannot be protected, Bangladesh cannot win. So, it is important to move forward in that direction, and for that, inter-ministerial and increased stakeholders' engagement is needed. This book is a knowledge product and knowledge products have some intellectual influence. Through this intellectual window and the platform of BIISS, the authors can contribute for advocating a planned harmonisation of the country. That was the reason behind BIP's contribution.

Mr Ahsan further added that the whole coastal belt is a hotspot of climate change. If all the plans of Bangladesh like the National Adaptation Plan and the Delta Plan are seen, they have special characteristics. Also in government policy plans, it has some special and highlighted priorities. To take up that, research and publications are needed, but most importantly, effective actions are needed. Bangladesh Institute of Planners is a trusted partner of the Government of Bangladesh including BIISS. So, in the next journey, if there is any initiative where BIP can contribute, they will be very happy to partner. They will also be very happy to support different government mechanisms



as well as other stakeholders on how to start this comprehensive, integrated planning system. So, it shall not go in a silo approach, like only the transport ministry constructed the bridge. It has a lot of impact on agriculture land, a lot of impact on other different service providing agencies. An integrated thinking and integrated planning system should be in place. The Institute of Planners, for one and a half year, did a separate study and prepared a spatial planning framework for the whole country. This framework was handed over to different distinguished ministers. They also plan to submit this framework to the Honourable Prime Minister in coming weeks.

Mr Ahsan concluded by saying that the dream has been shown by the leadership of a smart and developed Bangladesh by 2041. We cannot afford unplanned urbanisation. For sustainable and planned urbanisation, BIP is working and it is committed to support all partners.



## OPEN DISCUSSION



### Professor Kazi Maruf Islam

*Department of Development Studies  
University of Dhaka*

**Professor Kazi Maruf Islam** from the University of Dhaka said that, as a book reviewer, he found that the authors put a lot of effort into producing this enormous piece of work. He informed the audience that this book is not only about the Padma Bridge. There is no denying of the fact that the Padma Bridge has been a wonderful landmark of Bangladesh's achievement, but this research has particularly focused on a very specific area, i.e., the population that is affected by the Padma Bridge construction. For him, this is a very

specific scientific endeavour that has focused only on the resettlement areas.

Professor Maruf informed the audience that there are two parts to focus while reviewing any scientific project. The first is the methodology part, which, in this study, he found that the authors have crafted in a very feasible and practical way. From a methodological perspective, he finds the study to be highly valid and reliable. The amount of data that the authors collected through all mixed methods like surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews perfectly fits with this kind of research. Secondly, he asserted that this book's theoretical debate contributes to the existing knowledge pool. He substantiated his argument by saying that, while doing this kind of research, like examining the effect of Padma bridge in the resettlement areas, it is necessary to consider that there might be an effect on individuals, households, communities, or it may affect the human-nature relation. In this book, the authors have covered economic, social, and environmental aspects, and they have also covered the immediate effects of this huge construction. As such, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the theoretical discussion in the book is important and significant.

Professor Maruf added, this research is significant for its findings. He conveyed to the audience the importance of comprehending the role of training in boosting income and the role of schools at resettlement sites in reducing the dropout rate. Finally, he expressed his appreciation to the authors and BIIS for undertaking this type of research project.





### **Md Nazrul Islam**

*Additional Foreign Secretary (Bilateral-East and West)*

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh*

**Md Nazrul Islam**, Additional Foreign Secretary (Bilateral-East and West), MoFA, inquired about the methodology followed in this research. Particularly, he wanted to know the total number of FGDs, KIIs, and surveys conducted. He also commented that this megaproject has significant national and international implications, and Bangladesh is looking forward to reaping the benefits. He also requested the chief guest

to focus on the 21 southern districts of Bangladesh so that Bangladesh can reap the maximum benefit from this megaproject.

### **Lieutenant Colonel (Retd.) Md Shahadat Hossain**

*Freelance Promoter and Consultant for Bangladesh-China Relations*

**Lieutenant Colonel Shahadat** commented that the book is interesting, and if the intention of this book is to disseminate the findings to a wider audience, then this book should immediately be published in Bengali. He suggested publishing the main gist, if not the entire book, in Bengali to enhance comprehension among a wider audience. He also suggested that the book can be distributed to various important libraries throughout the country.





**Mr Shah Alom**  
*Managing Director*  
*Habib Traders*

**Mr. Shah Alom** stated that Arab states tend to overlook the economic development of Qatar. As Qatar and Bangladesh both became independent in 1971, the cases are similar. From history, it can be seen that Bangladesh played a crucial role in the development of the Indian subcontinent both in 1947 and 1971. So, Bangladesh can still go through a similar development as Qatar if the government focuses on the development of the southern and northern regions equally. In addition, Bangladesh

has more potential than Singapore, but Singapore has more ambition and a better development model. He suggested taking help from Singapore's model by integrating inequality, variation, and new financial pathways. However, to achieve these goals, the role of the honourable Prime Minister is important.

**Afshana Parven Shahid**  
*Assistant Professor, Department of Fisheries*  
*and Marine Science*  
*Noakhali Science and Technology University,*  
*Bangladesh*



**Dr Afshana Parvin** raised a question regarding why there were more female participants in the training than male participants. She also inquired about the possibility of the male population in that community leaving the area or experiencing displacement or migration to other locations, potentially discouraging them from participating in such training programs.

Another thing that she pointed out was that, from the IUCN country head, she came to know that he had made that remote sense. It uses remote sensing applications for these river bridge areas to understand it. She further inquired about the type of satellite used, whether it was landsat or other.



## RESPONSES FROM THE SPEAKERS



### **Dr. Razia Sultana**

*Senior Research Fellow*

*Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)*

**Dr. Razia Sultana**, Senior Research Fellow of BIISS at first informed the audience that the background story of the PMB would be added to the next work of BIISS, which is about the Padma Rail Link Project. In response to the question of Dr Nazrul Islam on methodology, she said that the researchers have adopted a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys, FGDs, and KIIs. The survey respondents were from the resettled communities. Out of 3012 resettled households, the

survey respondents were chosen. She explained that the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in every district, with two separate FGDs for each site, one for females and another for males. Regarding the expert interviews, she mentioned that the respondents were those who are associated with these development activities. The noteworthy respondents were academicians from universities, policymakers, PMB engineers, ESDO's program manager, chairmans of the concerned union parishads, UNOs, and other related experts on this particular topic.

In response to the target audience of the book, Dr Razia said that this book will give guidance to development practitioners as well as policymakers. The book's final chapter provides specific recommendations for policymakers. She mentioned that though there are adequate primary schools, there is a lack of secondary and higher secondary educational institutions. This recommends that policymakers can construct all types of educational institutions equally on the resettlement sites. In terms of connectivity, she mentioned that the feeder roads are not up to the mark. They are very narrow, and local buses can barely pass smoothly, resulting in a higher accident rate. Therefore, the book recommends improving the feeder roads and other related roads.



**Md Rafid Abrar Miah**

*Research Officer*

*Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS)*

In response to the question on sample size, **Md Rafid Abrar Miah**, Research Officer of BISS, said that out of 3,012 households, approximately 212 households were surveyed for a 94 percent confidence interval and a 6 percent margin of error. About the question of the qualitative method, he informed the audience that the authors have conducted a total of 25 key informant interviews (KIIs) including national and local individuals. In addition, nine focus group discussions

(FGDs) were also conducted containing around 10 to 12 participants each.

Regarding the issue of increasing the number of female participants, he informed the audience that the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has a goal to promote women's empowerment. With this goal in mind, the bridge authority has implemented numerous awareness programs to engage females in the training programs designed for the PAPs. He argued that the heightened number of female participants in the training sessions is the result of such awareness campaigns.



**Zahid Hasan**

*Research Officer*

*Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP)*

**Mr Zahid Hasan** from BIP informed the audience that in this book, the authors have used Landsat nine images and the reason behind this is the large availability of these data and a lower time period of data in Landsat nine images. He added that it is free, and the spatial resolution is 30.





**S M Mehedi Ahsan**

*General Secretary, Bangladesh Institute of  
Planners (BIP)*

**S M Mehedi Ahsan**, General Secretary of BIP, said that for doing this research, the authors have used free images because of the paucity of time, it was not possible to produce images. He assured the audience that the authors have utilised the available free images in the best possible ways. He added that BIP focused not only on the three districts, but also on the 21 districts. In chapter four, the focus was more on connectivity, and in chapter six, it is more about sustainability and environmental issues.

## REMARKS BY THE CHIEF GUEST



**Waseqa Ayesha Khan, MP,**  
*Honourable State Minister, Ministry of  
Finance*  
*Government of the People's Republic of  
Bangladesh*

**HE Waseqa Ayesha Khan, MP** shared that she is honoured and delighted to be speaking in this book launching program of 'Development-Human Security Nexus: A Study on Padma Bridge Resettlement Areas'. She recalled the greatest Bengali of all time, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and noted that, after independence, Bangabandhu focused on reconstruction of the war-ravaged, war-torn

country and rehabilitation of millions of displaced people. He dreamt of building 'Shonar Bangla' where people could live with freedom, dignity and prosperity. Following Bangabandhu's footsteps, his illustrious daughter, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been implementing the fast-track projects, such as the Padma Multipurpose Bridge (PMB), the Metro Rail, the Elevated Expressway, the Bangabandhu Tunnel, the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the Matarbari Deep Sea Port, Payra Port, etc. After the successful implementation of Digital Bangladesh, the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared another visionary initiative. In the last election manifesto, the vision of building a Smart Bangladesh by 2041 has been declared. The election manifesto clearly states 11 priority areas, which include development and various other factors.

At this stage, HE Waseqa Ayesha Khan shared a quote from the Honourable Prime Minister's speech during the PMB opening ceremony in 2022. She stated, "This bridge is not just bricks, cement, iron and concrete. This bridge is our pride, a symbol of our capacity, our strength, our dignity. This bridge belongs to the people of Bangladesh". Following this, honourable State Minister shared another quote from the national parliament session of June 2022 where the Honourable Prime Minister stated, "The 42 pillars of the Padma Bridge are the reflection of a courageous Bangladesh". There were various conspiracies against building the Padma Bridge but when the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presented a painting of the Padma Bridge to the World Bank President at the 50 years partnership celebration between Bangladesh and the World Bank, it aroused a sense of pride in all of us.





Besides the huge economic impact of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, there are many sentiments attached to this infrastructure. In this context, the Honourable State Minister shared an anecdote. Being from Chattogram, she could hardly fathom the sentiments of the people from the 21 districts which have been connected through the Padma Bridge. But when she was crossing the bridge for the first time, she had tears in her eyes because of what it meant for Bangladesh and the people of the country.

HE Waseqa Ayesha Khan congratulated BIIS for publishing research which explores the complex dynamics between development initiatives and human security and offers valuable insights into how the human security aspects have been improved by the implementation of the PMB. She referred that the environmental management plan was implemented to minimise or avoid adverse environmental impacts. She quoted from the book that the PMB project is providing thousands of people with better livelihoods and greater access to essential services. Under the resettlement action plans, the PMB project authority has developed eight resettlement sites. Every resettlement site has been developed with civic amenities such as school, malls, masjid, market, overhead tank for water supply, electricity supply and roads. This has contributed toward changing the lives of the resettled population. Training and skill development programs have also been provided, as discussed in the presentations.

At this stage, Her Excellency read an excerpt from page 166 of the book. In that page, Rahima, a resident of Madaripur Resettlement Site quoted, “Padma Bridge is our bridge. It is our country’s pride. We are happy that we not only got money to rebuild our houses, but also got the legal



documents. We can also live together with our extended families”. This proves how lives have been changed in resettlement sites. Here the Honourable State Minister shared that she does not think that there are many megaprojects in the world which have actually changed so many lives. And at the same time, the project had planned many useful steps for the resettled population.

Next, Her Excellency read another excerpt from the executive summary of the book. She shared, linkage between development and human security was evident through three sets of nexuses in the case of the PMB project. First, the PMB managed to transform a short-term development driven agenda into a long-term sustainable mechanism ensuring economic security. Secondly, it combines social development through social infrastructure and social position by increasing the safety nets and accessibility beyond basic needs, which in turn promoted the ideas of freedom from want and freedom from fear. Finally, the PMB project also considered holistic environmental approaches through sustainable management of resources and minimising negative impacts in the long run. She stated that development should be inclusive, sustainable, and prioritise the well-being and dignity of all individuals. The PMB project is the best example of it, under the transformative leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

As she reached the end of her deliberation, the Honourable State Minister thanked the researchers and BISS for their efforts in conducting the extensive study and bringing attention to an issue of utmost significance. She opined that the dedicated research and advocacy is commendable. She shared that there is no doubt that this work will spark meaningful dialogue and inspire positive



changes for next megaprojects, not just in Bangladesh but also around the world. She hoped BISS will conduct research on other development projects and continue the good work. She concluded by extending her heartfelt congratulations to the researchers and everyone else who has been connected to the publication of this book.



## REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN



**Ambassador A F M Gousal Azam Sarkar**  
*Chairman*

*Bangladesh Institute of International and  
Strategic Studies (BIISS)*

**Ambassador A F M Gousal Azam Sarkar** said that the Padma Multi-purpose Bridge constructed by the Government of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a groundbreaking infrastructure initiative. He mentioned that the bridge is more than a physical infrastructure. It is rather symbolic of national strength, confidence, pride, and unwavering commitment of the government towards continuous progress and a sustainable future for the nation. It's a great step forward

in realising father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream of a golden Bengal. Furthermore, the bridge plays a pivotal role in bolstering the country's strategic position and importance in regional connectivity, economic integration and development. Ambassador Sarkar pointed out that this colossal initiative which is done successfully not only showcases Bangladesh's economic progress, but also serves as an attraction for international investors and partners in search of stable and win-win megaproject investment opportunities. Large-scale infrastructure projects undeniably play a crucial role in fostering growth and development in a developing country like Bangladesh. He highlighted that what remained to be seen was the question of studying and evaluating how displacement of a considerable number of local inhabitants necessitated for establishing this huge infrastructure ultimately went in terms of resettlement and economic, social and environmental reintegration. Additionally, the book has also studied the multifaceted impacts on the lives and livelihood of displaced people to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. The study recorded in the book has been done with professional rigour. It did what was in the scope of it and in the method that was appropriate.

Ambassador Sarkar emphasised that based on field-level data, the study also examined how the issues of human security have been reflected or integrated into the management process of the project-affected persons within the bridge context, ensuring adherence to international norms and standards. Findings of the study with data and evidence indicate that the bridge project has effectively integrated elements of sustainable livelihood with human security. It was further revealed in the study that despite encountering initial formidable challenges, which



the policymakers had to face progressively, several issues have been addressed successfully, particularly concerning the resettlement of EFPs. It was also found that the bridge project has successfully tackled all risk factors affecting the displaced persons, ultimately enhancing their human security compared to their circumstances surrounding pre-PMB construction and after the construction. It's a matter of satisfaction that the findings are positive. He said that this is the beginning of the positive and beneficial impact that is going to grow. In conclusion, Ambassador Sarkar suggested the dissemination of the book among the planning community, diplomatic circles and relevant international organizations, development partners and institutions.



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The Editorial Team thankfully acknowledges Farzana Fatima, Former Research Officer, Fahim Shahriar, Azdika Afsana, and Tahsin Binte Hasan, Research Interns for thier assistance in preparing the proceedings.



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### Mailing Address

1/46, Old Elephant Road (West of Ramna Police Station), Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.  
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