

Tribute – Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury

Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, the most eminent personality in the engineering community of Bangladesh who played a cardinal role in the development of the infrastructure system of Bangladesh, passed away on 28th April 2020 at the age of 76. Professor Choudhury had the highest professional credentials as a civil and structural engineer. He was a beehive of energy as well as an internationally recognized civil engineer, educationist, researcher, administrator, and leader. What struck us most was Prof Choudhury's highly



strategic vision for the future development of new information-based communication technologies, which provided the platform for today's "Digital Bangladesh". His involvement in different sectors of our national development seemed to be limitless. Prof Choudhury's contribution to infrastructure development of Bangladesh cannot be overstated. Next to no significant development project in Bangladesh has been implemented without the involvement of Prof Choudhury. He acted as an expert consultant to many national and international projects related to expressways, bridges, buildings, industries, transmission towers, aircraft hangars, stadiums, ports and jetties, computerization of public and private sector organizations, etc. Prof Choudhury was the team leader for the Multipurpose Cyclone Shelter Program and prepared the master plan for the shelters constructed along the coastline of the Bay of Bengal that saved millions of lives. He was the chairman of the Panel of Experts (PoE) of the Bangabandhu (Jamuna) Bridge. In recognition of his contributions, he was awarded the 'Ekushey Padak' in Science and Technology in 2017 by the Government of Bangladesh, an 'Honoris Causa' from the University of Manchester in 2010 and the 'Order of the Rising Sun' in 2018 from the Government of Japan (the highest award conferred to a foreign national), etc. He was inducted as a National Professor by the Government of Bangladesh in 2018.

Professor Choudhury was selected as the chairman of the PoE of Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project (PMBP). While a complicated situation arose during the selection of Construction Supervision Consultant for the construction of the main bridge and river training works, Professor Choudhury assured the government that the Bangladeshi engineers have the capability to lead the design and construction of the challenging mega project. The Government of Bangladesh finally decided to build this largest infrastructure in the country using its own fund and expertise. This decision of the government placed enormous responsibilities on the local PoE members. In the meantime, several national and international experts also joined as members of the PoE of PMBP. The local experts under the leadership of Professor Choudhury solved the problem by introducing new technology and redesigning some piers of the bridge. This complex bridge adopted new and innovative technologies and established new records in the construction industry through local engineers.

Professor Choudhury's immense contribution in leading the PMBP has been recognized by the Honorable PM Sheikh Hasina at the eve of the opening of the bridge. She wished that Prof Choudhury was present to see the completion of the bridge.

Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury's name will be immortalized in the country's development history as one of the great builders of Bangladesh. His unanticipated, premature, departure from our midst has not just left a void in his family and among all who knew him but also caused a colossal and irreparable loss for the nation.