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**Seventh Regional Meeting of the South Asian Think Tanks**



BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) and the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) jointly organized the seventh Regional Meeting of the South Asian Think Tanks based on the theme Remaining Relevant in the Policy World: Sustainability Challenges of Think Tanks. 18 South Asian Think Tanks (SATTs) based in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar came together at the meeting to exchange ideas and learnings, discuss challenges and opportunities, share successes and most importantly to develop a post-Think Tank Initiative (TTI) strategy in order to sustain the network as the eight years of TTI support is coming to an end. Besides, donor and private sector representatives, development partners, special guests and other policy stakeholders also attended the meeting.

The three-day long meeting, held on 5-7 February 2018, explored how the support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to SATTs has strengthened their capacities in terms of generating new knowledge and becoming more effective in policy engagement. The SATTs also discussed how they will continue to pursue policy engagement in the coming days once TTI withdraws its support to them.

Attending as the Guest of Honor, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Chairman, BRAC told that Think tanks have a crucial role to play since their primary function is to help governments and policymakers understand, and make informed choices about issues of significant domestic and international concern and relevance. In carrying out this role, think tanks are often required to negotiate and perform a mediating function between the government and the public that helps to build trust and confidence in public officials.

“Thus, by challenging the conventional wisdom, standard operating procedures and business as usual of bureaucrats and elected officials, think tanks can serve as informed and independent voices in the policy arena. In order to do this well, they must strike a balance between research, analysis and outreach - a task that is becoming increasingly challenging in the present fast-changing national, regional and global environment”, he added.

Prof Rehman Sobhan, Board Chairman of CPD and the chair of the opening session told Think Tanks have a wider responsibility to the society at large. Think tanks independence is critical for credibility and shaping own agendas whether in

dealings with governments or funders.

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director (ED) of BIGD, in his welcome speech said, Think Tanks have to come up with more innovative ideas. He urged to all TTs: "We should all feel very energized and enthused. Collectively we can do a lot more. We need to collaborate in order to sustain our own strength and development".

"Our world, our region and our countries are increasingly looking inward, these are dangerous trends. Independent thinking was never more necessary to engage policy makers and influence public opinion to correct these trends." he added.

While looking for fund Think Tanks need to be very careful in being engaged with private or corporate sector, said Dr. Fahmida Khatun, ED of CPD.

Mr. Andrew Hurst, Program Leader, Think Tank Initiative (TTI) of IDRC summarized the decade long programme experience with the TTI funded southern think tanks.

The three-day long meeting included nine thematic sessions focuses on how the support from IDRC to the SATTs strengthened their capacities to generate new knowledge and becoming more effective in policy engagement. It also focused how the TTs would continue pursuing their policy engagement in the coming days once TTI withdraws its support to them.

The meeting ended with a consensus that the collaboration among the SATTs towards regional development will be continued with the commitment of sharing collective knowledge and resources. All the think tanks unanimously agreed that an association of Southern Think Tanks is needed to give stronger voice to the region.

### Political Empowerment is Necessary to Improve the Condition of the Women says Fazle Hossain Badsha, MP



Political Empowerment is necessary to improve the condition of the women. Women's are not empowered in current local government system, they have been ignored. Every government is weakening the local government. It is high time to change some laws for strengthening the local government as well as the empowerment of the women. Lawmaker Mr. Fazle Hossain Badsha, MP said these at the Policy Conference on Inclusive & Gender Responsive Public Services: Reality, Challenges and Opportunity. He said women of the country are harassed both socially and politically.

BIGD; ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB); CARE Bangladesh; Christian Aid and Bangladesh Urban Forum jointly organized the conference on 28-29 March, 2018 at the city. The conference comprised of four thematic sessions which are Safe Cities for Women, Inclusive and Gender Responsive Public Services, Governing Public Services, and Financing Public Services.

Presenting the keynote paper AAB Manager Ms. Nuzhat Zabin stated that investment in public services, especially in health, transportation and urban services, has been declining. For the health sector, the budget was 4.71 per cent in the fiscal year 2016-17 while it was 6.02 per cent in the fiscal year 2009-10.

According to International Budget Partnership Open Budget Survey 2017, Bangladesh scored only 13 out of 100 in inclusiveness indicator, and 41 in transparency which means Bangladesh is still weak in information flow. Mentioning from a recent study she said service sectors like health and transport are not gender sensitive where 42 per cent women face rude behavior in hospitals while 84 per cent women think the transportation system and services are unsafe.

AAB Country Director Ms. Farah Kabir said the government is elected for serving people and it is the duty of them to ensure equal service for all citizens. Urban Forum adviser Mr. Mostafa Qaiyum said contribution of the disadvantaged people is more in development but they do not have any place in development planning and implementation process.

Christian Aid Bangladesh Country Director Mr. Shakeb Nabi said that a right package of services for right people is essential to make it public-useable. Planner Ms. Salma A Shafi said that the crisis arose as the government failed to address issues of urban poor and women in the urban planning. CARE Bangladesh Country Director Mr. Zia Chowdhury said despite rise in per capita income, and development, the grassroots people do not get quality services as the service centres are not pro-people. He urged to include the poor and marginalized women in system to get better service. Department of Women Affairs Director Mr. Ataur Rahman and planner Professor Akter Mahmood among others spoke at the inaugural session.

BIGD Senior Research Associate Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam while presenting his paper said 48% households didn't know about secondary disposal and tertiary level disposal site remained unknown to 87% respondents. Existing scenario about



primary waste management provides evidences to undertake policies for waste collection, segregation, and recycling; which, on one hand, transforms waste into resources and on the other hand, improves the city's environment and hence, livability.

Ms. Sahida Khondokar while presenting her paper Maternal Healthcare Governance in Bangladesh: Transparency, Accountability, Efficiency of service delivery told constraints like lack of awareness, socio-economic status and physical inaccessibility in demand side are happening due to governance failure.

Ms. Nowreen Yasmin, Research Associate; Research and Evaluation Division BRAC told that comprehensive and targeted urban slum policy initiatives are necessary to empower women as Active Development Agent while presenting a paper titled Why Policy Matters for the Retention of Children at Primary Schools in Slum Areas?- A Way forward from BRAC's Experience.

Dr. Rashid E Mahbub, President, National Health Rights Movement said that we do believe government is trying but if we look at the budget we found different things. We are talking about

these but there is not enough money for these.

Mr. Mosta Gausul Hoque, Project Management Consultant, CPTU, IMED, Ministry of Planning said even in the local waste management system there is also politics. But if the politics is served for the good purpose then it is appreciated which is absent in Dhaka city.

Representing BIGD in the closing session Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow and Head of the Urban, Climate Change and Environment Cluster emphasized for more community driven measures to ensure inclusive and gender responsive public services in cities of Bangladesh. Highlighting recent alarming increase of harassment of women in public transport and other places he urged for more social movement as well strong implementation measures.

Mr. Anowarul Haq, Director, CARE Bangladesh; Ms. Maheen Sultan, Acting Head, Gender Cluster of BIGD; Mr. Asgar Ali Sabri, Director, Programme, Policy & Campaigns, AAB and Ms. Farah Kabir moderated the sessions of the conference.

### Contract Signing Ceremony of SEIP-BIGD

The contract signing ceremony between Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) and BIGD, BRAC University held on February 11, 2018. Mr. Abdul Rauf Talukdar, National Project Director, Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP), Ministry of Finance, on behalf SEIP and Dr. Sultan Hafeez

funds provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

This contract has been signed for training to Mid and Higher Level Managers for Knitwear Sector for establishing an Executive Development Center (EDC) at BIGD to impart managerial training for Knitwear Garment Sector in Bangladesh. Under the financial assistance of the SEIP and ADB, this training programme will be organized in the name of "Post Graduate Diploma in Knitwear Industry Management (PGD-KIM)" by the EDC at BIGD. The program will continue until December 2020.

Mr. Abdul Rauf Talukdar said, we have to build our capacity more, otherwise, we have to hire more managers from outside. This training programme is appreciated by everybody and we need to work hard for its success.

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman said, Education alone is not enough, we have to accelerate the process of skill development that are necessary and critical to economy in various sectors. In line with the situation the SEIP programme will play an important role.

Mr. Jalal Ahmed, Executive Project Director, SEIP, Ministry of Finance congratulate BIGD, BRAC University and hoped that BIGD will be able to train the people successfully and put an impact on the growth of this sector.

Ms. Sunhwa Lee, Principal Social Sector Specialist, Human and Social Development Division, South Asia Department, ADB said that the university's enthusiasm is very important to implement the program. ADB is happy to be a part of this programme, she added.



Rahman, Executive Director of BIGD signed the contract. SEIP has been undertaken with the objective of developing skilled workforce for productive and priority sectors. SEIP is utilizing the

# Country Lost an Eminent Researcher

**Simeen Mahmud**  
(1950-2018)

Ms. Simeen Mahmud, Head of Gender Studies Cluster and coordinator of Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST) at BIGD, passed away on 19 March 2018 at Mount Auburn Hospital in the USA.

She had been admitted to the hospital in a critical condition. Daughter of late Mirza Nurul Huda, popularly known as Mr. MN Huda, and Ms. Kulsum Huda, she left behind her husband noted economist as well as Former Caretaker Government Advisor Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, a daughter and two sons. Her father was finance minister and vice president of Bangladesh.

Simeen Mahmud studied statistics at Dhaka University and medical demography at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She joined Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in 1974 as staff demographer and retired in 2008 as research director of the Population Studies Division. She was a MacArthur Fellow at the Harvard Centre for Population and Development in 1993.

As a demographer her research focus was on women's status, work and fertility, on conceptualising the processes of women's empowerment and on women's employment. She also researched extensively on women's access to NGO membership and micro finance and the impact on their lives and gender outcomes. Recently her research had shifted to gender dynamics in the labour market and social norms around women's work.

Simeen worked in partnership with several national and international research organizations and agencies, universities and donors. She was very honest in her personal and professional life. She was very cautious in terms of research and speaking as she never cited or wrote anything without any reference. In professional life she was well known as Real Researcher. She loved to encourage other colleagues to engage themselves in any sort of research and she loved to share sorrows and happiness with them. Her colleagues also loved her a lot and treated her as their guardian.

She personally loved life and nature. Simeen Mahmud, full of human qualities, secretly used to help many people to study. She used to perform regular prayers. Her colleagues and relatives, remember her as a relentless researcher for empowering women. In her sudden death, the country lost a first class social and women researcher. A memorial for Simeen Mahmud was organized by BIGD on 22 March, 2018.

## Workshop on "Gender in Research and Organisational Excellence" held

It is necessary to look beyond a uni-dimensional definition of gender and examine the implications of other socio-economic factors on the gender equity discourse. Finding gender disaggregated data is problematic. These data gaps need to be filled so that gender equity issues can be reflected in policy interventions. Significant challenges are faced during data collection on gender violence issues which need to be overcome. These observations were made at a day-long workshop titled "Gender in Research and Organizational Excellence" held on February 4, 2018 at BRAC-CDM Savar jointly organized by CPD and BIGD.

A total of 38 participants of several South Asian think tanks from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the workshop. There were two thematic sessions addressing gender in research and organizational excellence, which were facilitated by Ms. Ratna M Sudarshan, a gender specialist from India, and Ms. Ranjani Krishnamurthy, Researcher and Consultant, Gender and Development based in India.



In the first session, participants from the think tanks displayed and showcased their stories on gender research, and how they contributed in improving knowledge on gender related policy research. They also highlighted the issues of data requirement, data collection and analysis for gender research. They identified lack of real-time and disaggregated data on gender impede policy intervention for the advancement of women. The participants stressed on filling these data gaps so that gender equity issues could be reflected in policy interventions.

In the second session, the participants looked into how gender equality and diversity are maintained within the think tanks through their policies, including human resource policy, promotion, basic minimum salary, leave policy, travel policy, etc. They discussed on how gender-diverse policies can strengthen institutional performance for achieving a gender-sensitive organization. The participants also emphasised on how patriarchal dimensions are controlling the access and capacities of women in the society.

## BIGD Co-organized a Side Event at the World Urban Forum – 9

The ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 7-13 February 2018, on the theme "Cities 2030 – Cities For All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda". BIGD in association with the Joint Work Programme Equitable Economic Growth in Cities of the Cities Alliance Partnership co-organized a side event titled Public Goods and Services as Pathway to Equitable City Economies in Bangladesh: Lessons from Sylhet and Narayanganj at the WUF 9 on February 12, 2018.

This side event focused on sharing experiences, lessons learned and initial research findings from the two campaign cities. The diagnostics and research undertaken by BIGD, as well as the multi-stakeholder partnerships established in the cities, reveal practical measures and





approaches that can be taken to utilise local assets to trigger increased productivity and opportunities for workers and formal and informal businesses. The session was structured around insights shared by representatives from the two cities as well as from BIGD and other development partners. The discussion departs from the Bangladeshi

experience and links to lessons relevant to secondary cities in low income countries elsewhere.

Presenting the keynote paper Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Research Fellow and Head UCCE of BIGD told, secondary cities in low income countries struggle to become 'engines of growth' due to lack of investment, infrastructure and service backlogs, low productivity and little opportunity to growing populations. In addition such cities are characterized by high levels of urban inequality. Overcoming these constraints require understanding the realities and challenges, greater public and private sector investments, and a high level of policy engagement. And in this case improved access to public goods and services can play important role by reducing inequalities and supporting productivity and growth, he added.

Mr. Dhiraj Ajay Suri, Regional Adviser-Asia of Cities Alliance notified, earlier, recognizing the potential of resources available at the local level, cities alliance joint programme for Equitable Economic Growth, in partnership with BIGD, launched a City Campaign targeted specifically at improving locally provided public goods and services. He added that cities alliance in association with BIGD tend to support improved access to public goods and services as a pathway to equitable and sustainable city economies.

Ms. Rubbina Karruna, Cities Advisor, DFID told that the donors need emphasize to the national governments to consider the importance of investing in sustainable urban infrastructure of their cities and countries.

Mr. Anisur Rahman Chowdhury, Urban Manager, Oxfam Bangladesh told that engagement of different stakeholders in public goods and services delivery process and resources allocation is important. Mr. Suresh Balakrishnan, Chief Technical Advisor (Bangladesh and Nepal), UNCDF told participations of civil society organizations (CSOs) should be ensured. Engagement of private sectors is also important, he added. He urged to focus on youth as they will be the driving force of economy.

Ms. Justina Marigold Assan, Hon. Mayor of Agona West Municipal, Ghana told local authorities should not depend totally on government resources rather unlocking the potential of local resources is vital. She emphasized on entrepreneur and leadership development as these are very important to accelerate the growth.

Ms. Marie Alexandra Kurth, Senior Urban Specialist of Cities Alliance Secretariat moderated the event where Mr. Rene Peter Hohmann, Senior Urban Specialist at the Cities Alliance Secretariat (UNOPS), Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Senior Research Associate and S M Gubair Bin Arafat, Research Associate of BIGD also spoke at the event.

WUF9 concluded with the consensus of 165 nations on the Kuala Lumpur (KL) Declaration, which agreed on adapting inclusivity and innovative solutions to create sustainable cities by 2030. The ninth edition of the forum, which was organised by the UN Habitat, was attended by nearly 23,000 participants with 102 ministers and deputy ministers. It was the first WUF conference led to the development of the New Urban Agenda, a guideline for sustainable urban policies.

## Institutional Change is Needed for Dispute Resolution

Unresolved dispute is a big problem in Bangladesh. It is very hard for Bangladesh to draw out from the unresolved disputes. More than half of the disputes are Land disputes. Institutional change is needed to improve the situation- finds a study.

Presenting a paper on Disputes, Institutions and Access to Justice: Overview of Dispute Resolution in Rural Bangladesh at a conference Mr. Martin Mattsson of Yale University said that one sixth of households having an unresolved dispute and approximately half of the households stating that unresolved dispute is a big problem in their community. Most of Bangladesh's rural population lacks access to reliable, timely and low cost Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM).

BIGD and the International Growth Centre (IGC) jointly organized the day-long conference titled Development Economics Conference on March 18, 2018 at the city. The conference comprised of three sessions titled Health, Firms and Energy, and Innovations for Development. Dr. Abul Kalam Azad, Director General of the Directorate General of Health Service and Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, ED of BIGD chaired the sessions. Dr. Faisal Ahmed, Chief Economist of Bangladesh Bank and Mr. Kamran T. Rahman, President of Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) attended the two separate sessions as Special Guests.

Presenting a paper on stress management among women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, University of Warwick researcher Paula Lopez-Pena said working women in the country are facing many types of barriers during their work and at workplaces and so their organization's could not yield better outcomes.

Attending as a discussant Dhaka University economics teacher Dr. Atonu Rabbani said working women in government sector were experiencing more stressful life than those in private sector. He urged the government to initiate stress management programmes for all the employees, especially for women.

Mr. Selim Gulesci, Assistant Professor of Economics at Bocconi University in Italy, told the growth of microcredit in developing countries like Bangladesh has been showing a

slower pace in recent times as many borrowers find it difficult to expand their business due to the existing repayment system while presenting his paper on Contractual Flexibility and Selection into Borrowing: Evidence from Bangladesh. The inflexible nature of the standard



microcredit contract may improve repayment behavior but can also discourage profitable investments that require more flexible terms, he added.

Presenting the findings of 'Social and Political Roots of Misallocation: State Ownership in China', Ms. Jaya Wen, a Yale University graduate, said the Chinese government faces trade-offs between two of its central goals, high growth and social stability. She said this trade-off is a key reason for the persistence of state-owned enterprises (SoEs), and thus also a large driver of misallocation in the Chinese economy.

Commenting on the study, BEF president Kamran said SoEs in Bangladesh definitely don't help in increasing productivity in the industries. Jute sector can be the perfect example of it as most of the state-owned jute industries are incurring consecutive losses and lack of accountability is responsible for that, he added.

Researcher of Vassar College Gisella A. Kagy presented her findings of the paper titled Thirty-Five Years Later: Evaluating Effects of Quasi-Random Child Health and Family Planning Programme in Bangladesh on Human Capital. She told that, Long term effect on height and cognitive development trend vary-finds a study on Matlab Maternal and child health and family planning programme.

Presenting a paper on Non-Price Energy Conservation Programme and Household Energy Consumption in Bangladesh, Monash University's Development Economist Dr. Asadul Islam said giving

energy saving tips can reduce energy consumption. The effects are stronger and significant for advice on electricity conservation compared to neighbor and social comparison.

Austin Davis of Yale University presented his paper on Why Did Sugercane Growers Suddenly Adopt Existing Technology at the event. Among others Dr. Ruchira Naved, Senior Scientist, ICDDR,B; Dr. Kazi Iqbal and Dr. Minhaj Mahmud, Senior Research Fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) attended the conference as discussants.

**Lack of Education and Skill is Lagging Behind the Women's Participation in the Formal Sector**

Women's participation increased to 33.5 percent in 2013 from 26.1 percent in 2002-2003, but 90.3 percent of them are employed in the informal sector and Women's participation in labor force is lagging behind in the formal sector and urban areas due to lack of education and skill, according to the report, "Bangladesh Gender Equality Diagnostic of Selected Sectors" that revealed in the National Dissemination Workshop on January 30, 2018 at a city hotel, jointly organized by BIGD and ADB.

National Women Development Policy 2011 aims to establish gender equality in all spheres of life and National Action Plan has been developed for its implementation. The gender vision of the 7th Five Year Plan will ensure equal opportunities and rights for both women and men; and women will be recognised as equal contributors in economic, social and political developments said Ms. Nasima Begum, ndc, Secretary to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs during her speech as a Chief Guest.

Mr. Manmohan Parkash, the Country Director of ADB chaired the inaugural session. Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, the ED of BIGD delivered the introductory remarks. Professor Md. Akter Mahmud, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Jahangirnagar University and Vice President of Bangladesh Institute of Planners; Dr. Kaniz Siddique, Economist,



and Ms. Maheen Sultan, Visiting Fellow of BIGD attended the event as panelists. More than a hundred participants from donor agencies, academics, government officials and development organizations attended the workshop.

The report was prepared by the CGST of BIGD, BRAC University, in collaboration with the ADB. The report highlights the key gender issues as well as best practices in the sectors. It also provides guidelines to ensure benefit for both women and men.

**Deliberative and Electoral Democracy Approaches Should be Run Parallel to Strengthen Citizen Engagement in Policy Making Process**

Practice of deliberative democracy should be strengthened for participation of citizens in policy making process in context of worsening situation in electoral democracy in the country, experts said at a roundtable discussion on reflections on citizens' engagement in development processes. They urged that both deliberative democracy and electoral democracy approaches should be run parallel. They also said that deliberative democracy would also expand the scope of participation of marginalised including poor and women in policy-making decisions by raising voices on their demands and rights. A strong deliberative democracy would also ensure proper utilisation of resources in development project implementation process and accountability of public representatives through intensive monitoring of citizens, they added.

BIGD and IGC Bangladesh jointly arranged the roundtable on Reflections on Citizens Engagement in Development Processes in Bangladesh and session on Leadership and Participatory Processes at the last day of the 3rd SANEM Annual Economists' Conference held at the BRAC Centre in Dhaka on February 18, 2018.



The two key-papers titled Mechanisms of Participatory Development: Fairness Norms and Value of Participation by Ms. Serena Cocciolo, Institute for International Economic Studies (IIES), Stockholm University and Female Leadership in the Bangladeshi Garment Industry: Views from RMG Productivity Projects by Dr. Atonu Rabbani, University of Dhaka, were presented at the session. Dr. Sayema Haque Bidisha, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka and Ms. Anna Minj, Director, Community Empowerment, Integrated Development,



Gender Justice & Diversity, BRAC also spoke at the session as discussants.

Dr. Mirza M. Hassan, Adjunct Fellow of BIGD presented the keynote paper on 'Institutionalizing Deliberative Democracy and Citizen Engagement in Patron-Clientelistic Settings' at the roundtable. In his paper, Dr. Hassan said citizens could shift their positions, opinion or preferences to an issue in the process of deliberative democracy while the electoral democracy was rarely capable to address such shifting preferences of citizens, until the next election. The democratic process in the country has been radically changing to cope with the present problems, he added.

Criticizing the key-papers, Professor Rounaq Jahan, Distinguished Fellow of CPD said that the democratic process since 1991 has been changing radically leading to a bipolar politics in the country. She called for tolerance in politics based on logically acceptable parameter to all parties. She hoped that all the political parties would exercise rational politics acceptable to the mass people in the country. She also said that deliberative democracy is not an alternative of electoral democracy rather the two approaches should go together toward deepening the democracy.

Dhaka University development studies department Professor Dr. Kazi Maruf Islam said that legitimacy deficit in electoral democracy distorted the process of

deliberative democracy. There were arrangements of public hearings at different stage of local government and administration but participants were allowed to talk only in alignment of ruling party position, he said as a panelist.

BIGD ED Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman said that both approaches should be run parallel. He also added in some instances deliberative democracy was also consistent with autocratic system where autocracy was practiced at national level and deliberative approach was followed at grassroots level. BIGD senior research associates Ms. Syeda Salina Aziz and Mr. Sultan M Zakaria, among others, spoke at the roundtable as panelists.

### Researcher's Other Activities

● Ms. Maheen Sultan, Acting Head and Visiting Fellow of CGST, BIGD

– delivered a lecture on Innovative Qualitative Methods for the Master in Public Policy Program of BRAC James P. Grant School of Public Health on February 27, 2018. She also spoke about unpaid care work at the Policy dialogue titled "Equality through Dignity" organized by Manusher Jonno Foundation on February 20, 2018.

– was a discussant at a workshop titled "Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and Rural Sector (CGA-ARS): Bangladesh" on January 7, 2018, at a city hotel, organized by FAO Bangladesh.

● BIGD's Research Fellow Dr. Md. Shanawez Hossain attended the 5th Anniversary of Friedrich-Ebert- Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh on March 13, 2018.

● Ms. Sumaiya Kabir Talukder, Ms. Kaneta Zillur, Ms. Miskat Jahan attended Bangladesh's Graduation from the Least Developed Countries Group, organized by CPD on March 11, 2018.

● Ms. Kabita Chowdhury, Ms. Sahida Khondaker, Research Associate; Ms. Sufia Khatun and Sanjida Parvin, Research Assistant of BIGD conducted qualitative fieldwork in the slums of Dhaka for the GAGE Urban Study research programme.

### Publications by BIGD Staff

#### OP-ED's:

● Daily Prothom Alo: ভাড়াটেরা কতটা নিরাপদ? by Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Senior Research Associate, BIGD, BRAC University on January 21, 2018.

● Daily Prothom Alo: ঢাকায় আবাসন: কতটা সাধের মধ্যে? by Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam, on January 6, 2018

● Daily Banik Barta: শ্রমবাজারে নারীর অংশগ্রহণ ও নারী উদ্যোক্তা প্রসঙ্গে by Ms. Simeen Mahmud, Head, Gender Cluster and CGST, BIGD, BRAC University on February 05, 2018.

● Prothomalo: ঢাকা কি আদৌ ধুলামুক্ত হবে? by Mr. Mohammad Sirajul Islam, on March 22, 2018.

● Bonikbarta: একজন দায়িত্বশীল ও নিরলস গবেষক by Mr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Executive Director, BIGD, BRAC University on March 22, 2018.

● Daily Star: Why the ultimate solution lies within Myanmar by Ms. Nazneen Ahmed, Programme Officer, BIGD, BRAC University on March 04, 2018.

#### Journal Articles

● Naim, S. J. (2018). Analysis of Entrepreneurial Intention Among Students in Business Schools of

Bangladesh. IJMBS/81/1/A-0268. International Journal of Management & Business Studies.

<http://www.ijmbs.com/vol-8-issue-1/Volume 8, Issue 1>

● Zakaria, S. M. 2018. 'গ্রামীণ সমাজে নৈতিক অবক্ষয়ে অর্থনৈতিক ও রাজনৈতিক ক্ষমতা কাঠামো পুনর্বিদ্যাসের প্রভাব: একটি বিশ্লেষণ (Impact of the transformation of economic and political power on the erosion of values in rural Bangladesh: An Analysis). Unnayan Shamiksha, 35, pp. 49-57.

#### Book Chapter

● Hasan, M. and Raihan, S. (2018). Navigating the Deals World: The Politics of Economic Growth in Bangladesh. In: L. Pritchett, K. Sen and E. Werker, ed., Deals and Development: The Political Dynamics of Growth Episodes, 1st ed. [online] UK: Oxford UP, pp.96 - 128. Available at: <http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/academic/pdf/openaccess/9780198801641.pdf> [Accessed 7 Mar. 2018].

## Executive Director's Activities

BIGD's ED Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman had several meetings in the first quarter of 2018 with a number of distinguished personalities such as prominent academics, policy makers and researchers regarding the research collaborations and other relevant issues of BIGD.

Dr. Rahman had meetings with Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Chairperson, BRAC; Professor Mustaque Khan, Department of Economics, SOAS; Mr. David Morley, Team Leader, Project Director & Mr. Tirtha Sarathi Sikder, National Coordinator, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Mr. Samar Verma, Senior Programme Specialist, International Development Research Centre (IDRC); Dr. Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Commissioner, Anti Corruption Commission (ACC); Ms. Mafruza Khan, Director Bangladesh

Country Programme, Porticus regarding discussion on Policy Research and Good Governance (PRG) project; Mr. M. Shahidul Islam, Secretary General of The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC); MD. Siddiqur Rahman, President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA); Dr. Moinul Khan, Director General, Customs Intelligence Division, National Board of Revenue; Dr. Shah Md. Ahsan Habib, Director Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM); Mr. Mohammad Abdur Rob, Joint Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics; Mr. Anisur Rahman, Joint Director, Bangladesh Bank; Mr. Bikram Chand, Lead Public Sector Specialist, The World Bank, Delhi Office; Ms. Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, Manuser Jonno Foundation; Mr. Shameron Abed, Director, Microfinance, BRAC; Dr. Mohiuddin Alamgir, Consultant, Asian

Development Bank; Mr. Abdur Rouf, Additional Secretary, and Director National Skills for Employment Program, Ministry of Finance; Professor Dr. Rumana Huque, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka; Md. Tariq Hassan, National Board of Revenue; Professor Asadul Islam, Monash University; Ms. Tina Blohm, Resident Representative of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh Office.

Dr. Rahman also attended the Certificate Ceremony of the Post Graduate Certificate course on Management of Land Acquisition, Re-settlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR). He also attended as a special guest at the BRAC Advocacy Forum meeting. He also moderated the session titled Role of connectivity in BIMSTEC integration at the conference titled BIMSTEC at its 20: Towards a Bay of Bengal Community.

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