



Press Release

July 7, 2021

Honoring Dr. Hameeda Hossain BDI Lifetime Achievement Award – 2021



The Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI), a non-partisan research and advocacy group of independent scholars based in the United States, is pleased to announce that Dr. Hameeda Hossain is the recipient of the 2026 BDI Lifetime Achievement Award.

Established in 2012, this prestigious award is designed to honor outstanding individuals or organizations who, through their scholarly and/or policy and civic engagements, have contributed significantly to understanding the challenges, and the ideals that have led to the development of Bangladesh and have improved the quality of life for its citizens. Through the award, BDI recognizes and celebrates the work of a scholar or institution of high reputation and integrity whose work has inspired others to develop and implement ideas for the betterment of the people of Bangladesh.

Dr. Hameeda Hossain, recipient of the Bangladesh Development Initiative's 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award, was honored in a virtual ceremony on June 26, 2021. The event attracted more than a hundred participants, including a distinguished panel of guest speakers and friends and colleagues from around the globe. These admirers of Dr. Hossain and her life's work enthusiastically shared their excitement and congratulations.

The program was moderated by Professor Elora Shehabuddin, Executive Committee Member of Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI). She first introduced Professor Munir Quddus, President of BDI, and explained that BDI is a professional organization composed of scholars and practitioners who are passionate about their shared vision of a prosperous and democratic Bangladesh.

Professor Quddus explained that the BDI Lifetime Achievement Award was established in 2012 to honor an outstanding individual whose work has contributed significantly to improving the lives of the people of Bangladesh. The award seeks to celebrate the work of a scholar of high reputation and integrity. By shining a light on this individual, we hope others will be inspired to follow in their footsteps, working to uplift the poor and marginalized. Past recipients include Professors Rehman Sobhan, Nurul Islam and Jamilur Reza Chowdhury.

In his formal introduction of the awardee, Professor Ahrar Ahmed, Executive Member of BDI, noted that Dr. Hossain was a founder-member of Ain-o-Salish Kendra, a leading human rights organization in the country, convener of Sramik Nirapotta Forum to ensure worker protections, vice-chair of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh, which emphasized the alleviation of poverty and sustainable development, and a Member, Board of Trustees, of the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation dedicated to research and scholarship. She attended UN Conference for Women in Mexico City in 1975, co-founded Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), a network of feminist scholars from the Global South in 1984, helped to establish the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, HQ in Kuala Lumpur, in 1986, and co-authored Bangladesh's Shadow Report for CEDAW in 2004 and 2010. She has, in addition, authored and edited several books. Her Oxford University dissertation became the basis for her book *Company Weavers of Bengal*, published by Oxford U.P. in 2010. In conclusion, he remarked, "As a human being too, she has remained unfailingly gracious and graceful. Her presence and energy have been significant in the promotion of progressive values in the country."

A number of distinguished guest speakers spoke on her many achievements, and how her work had influenced them personally and professionally. The panel included Dr. Kamal Hossain, Professor Devaki Jain, Professor Rehman Sobhan, Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta, Khushi Kabir, Dr. Faustina Pereira, and Professor Samia Khatun. It was clear from these testimonies—and the more impromptu ones offered throughout the evening from colleagues, friends, and relatives—that she has spent a lifetime in the cause of human rights, women's rights, democracy and justice; she has worked quietly, without ever seeking the limelight; and she has mentored with kindness and compassion generations of researchers and colleagues, introducing them to her wide-ranging and influential networks. In her own lecture titled "The Challenges of Citizenship in Building a Just Society," Dr. Hossain described how she had witnessed major events in twentieth-century South Asian history and worked with others toward a more just society. Professor Farida Khan, Editor of *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, BDI's peer-reviewed scholarly publication, talked briefly about the multi-disciplinary focus of the journal and the importance of incorporating the achievements of those such as Dr. Hossain in articles published in the journal. Professor Shehabuddin then brought the program to a close by thanking everyone for their participation.

While the Zoom platform had the wonderful advantage of bringing together admirers from across the globe to celebrate a remarkable individual, BDI looks forward to honoring Dr. Hameeda Hossain again, in person, at its next conference (date yet to be determined).

The recording of the entire program is available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEZo3zWCcas>

For additional information on Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI), please visit www.bdiusa.org or contact Dr. Munir Quddus, President, BDI (muquddus@pvamu.edu).