



## Article

# Padma Bridge in Global Media and Boost to SDGs in Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine how the global media covered the Padma Bridge inauguration news and its contribution to achieving the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) of Bangladesh. After overcoming several obstacles, Bengalis' desire to use their own money is set to become a reality. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The first stage was using convenience the sampling method to gather information on the Padma Multipurpose Bridge's opening, from 25 June to 25 July 2022, from the usual worldwide media and TV networks. The information coverage of several news sources from various countries was subsequently investigated utilizing the content analysis approach. In one way, newspaper stories, expert comments, research papers on the Padma Bridge, government reports, the Bangladesh Planning commission, and finance ministry records have all been analysed to collect the Padma Bridge's role in fulfilling SDGs. The data show that the Padma Bridge, which showcases Bangladesh's financial potential, is given significant weight in the international media. The Padma Bridge will contribute to a 29% increase in Bangladesh's development industry, a 9.5% increase in agricultural output, an 8% increase in the industrial and transportation sectors, and a 0.84% annual decrease in poverty. By the year 2041, Bangladesh hopes to be a prosperous, ecologically friendly, and socially inclusive monarchy. The Padma Bridge will facilitate the development of new rail networks, improve connectivity, and expand global trade. Through this bridge, the enhancement of people's lifestyles and subsistence abilities is made possible in a significant way.

**Keywords:** Padma Bridge; global media; boost; SDGs; Bangladesh



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## 1. Introduction

The Padma Bridge is a multipurpose road and rail bridge that spans the Padma River, one of the largest rivers in Bangladesh, and is the longest bridge in the country, with a length of 6.15 km (Islam et al. 2020). It is a mega infrastructure that aims to connect the southern region of the country to the capital city of Dhaka. Padma Bridge aims to boost the country's economy by improving transportation and communication networks and reducing travel time for people and goods. It is also expected to have a positive impact on the country's social and economic development by facilitating better access to healthcare, education, and other basic services (Sharmin et al. 2017).

The Padma Bridge project in Bangladesh has been making waves in the global media, particularly in the context of its economic and political significance for the country. International media outlets such as CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera have covered the project extensively, highlighting its potential to transform the transportation infrastructure of Bangladesh and boost the country's economic growth. The project has also been featured in national publications such as The Daily Star and The Dhaka Tribune.

The construction of the Padma Bridge has been the subject of much media attention, particularly in the context of its funding and implementation. Originally planned as a joint

venture between the Bangladeshi government and the World Bank, the project faced delays and controversy when the World Bank withdrew its funding in 2012, citing concerns over corruption allegations (Islam et al. 2010). The bridge's Benefit–Cost Ratio (BCR) was 1.6% in 2010, and its Economic Internal Rate of Return (ERR) was 18%, according to Maunsell, the project's design consultant (Haider 2021; BBA 2010).

Despite these setbacks, the Bangladeshi government has pressed ahead with the project with funding from domestic sources and other international partners. One of the key benefits of the Padma Bridge project is its potential to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in Bangladesh.

The modern global economy requires the full development of digital communication, transportation, water, energy, waste management, and other infrastructure. There are several opportunities for Bangladesh's development made possible by the Padma Bridge (De Silva et al. 2010). In 2030, Bangladesh will have fulfilled all of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) requirements. By exploiting the excellent connection provided by the Padma Bridge, Bangladesh will find it simple to achieve the SDG target. They predicted that, if the environment for communication and exchange is enhanced, the local poverty rate will decrease by around 1% annually, while the national poverty rate will decrease by 0.84% annually. As a result, the earnings of our people will rise. The UN's SDGs will be more likely to be achieved by 2030 as a result of the bridge. The typical poverty rate in the country is expected to fall as a result of the opening of the Padma Bridge, according to economists. This research will help the policymakers understand the role of the Padma Bridge in boosting the SDGs and global media's concentration on Padma Bridge.

### *1.1. Why Did Global Media Pay Huge Attention to It?*

The Padma Bridge is a significant infrastructure project in Bangladesh that has garnered global attention for several reasons. Here are some of the reasons why the global media has paid a great deal of attention to the Padma Bridge:

#### *1.1.1. Economic Importance*

The Padma Bridge is one of the largest infrastructure projects in Bangladesh's history, and it is expected to have a significant impact on the country's economy. The bridge will connect the southwestern region of Bangladesh with the capital, Dhaka, and the port city of Chittagong, creating new trade routes and increasing economic activity in the country.

#### *1.1.2. Corruption Scandal*

A corruption issue involving the Padma Bridge project surfaced in 2012 when the World Bank stopped a USD 1.2 billion loan to Bangladesh due to corruption suspicions. The scandal has resulted in the arrest and prosecution of several people and involves accusations of bribery, kickbacks, and money laundering.

#### *1.1.3. Political Significance*

The construction of the Padma Bridge is a high-profile project that is being closely watched by the international community. The Bangladeshi government is investing a considerable amount of money into the project, and there have been concerns about corruption and mismanagement. The global media has been keeping a close eye on the project to ensure that it is being carried out transparently and effectively.

#### *1.1.4. Cost and Scale*

The Padma Bridge is one of the largest infrastructure projects in Bangladesh's history, and it is expected to cost around USD 3 billion. This makes it a massive undertaking, both in terms of the resources required to complete it and the potential economic impact it could have on the region (Rahman et al. 2016).

#### 1.1.5. International Funding

The project has received significant funding from international sources, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This has made it a topic of interest to global financial institutions and donors. In 2011, the World Bank suspended a USD 1.2 billion loan for the project due to allegations of corruption. This sparked a major controversy in Bangladesh, and the subsequent investigation and legal proceedings were closely followed by the global media.

#### 1.1.6. Geopolitical Significance

The completion of the Padma Bridge is seen as a significant development for Bangladesh's economic growth and development. It could also have wider geopolitical implications, as it would provide a new trade route between Bangladesh and neighboring countries (Haider 2021).

#### 1.1.7. Technological Feat

The Padma Bridge is a massive engineering feat, and its construction has required the use of innovative technology and advanced engineering techniques. The global media has been interested in the project because of the technical challenges involved in its construction and the potential for new technologies to be developed.

#### 1.1.8. Environmental Concerns

The construction of the Padma Bridge has raised concerns about its potential impact on the environment, particularly on the Padma River, which is an important source of freshwater for the region. The global media has been closely monitoring the project to ensure that it is being carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner.

#### 1.1.9. Political Implications

The corruption scandal has had political implications in Bangladesh, leading to protests and controversy. The government of Bangladesh has been accused of suppressing the investigation and trying to cover up the corruption scandal, which has led to criticism from the international community.

The Padma Bridge is an important project that has significant economic, political, and technological implications for Bangladesh and the global community. Its construction has been closely watched by the global media to ensure that it is being carried out effectively, transparently, and in an environmentally sustainable manner. The Padma Bridge is a significant infrastructure project located in Bangladesh that spans the Padma River, connecting the southern part of the country with the capital, Dhaka. Overall, the Padma Bridge is a large and complex infrastructure project with significant international funding and potential economic and geopolitical implications. These factors have made it a topic of interest for the global media.

### 1.2. SDGs and Padma Bridge of Bangladesh

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The SDGs aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. Each of the SDGs has specific targets and indicators that are intended to guide global efforts toward achieving the goals by 2030. The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They are intended to be a blueprint for a better and more sustainable future for all. Bangladesh is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has made significant progress toward achieving them in recent years. The Padma Bridge, a mega infrastructure project in Bangladesh, has the potential to contribute, significantly, to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. Overall, the Padma Bridge is

expected to have a transformative impact on Bangladesh's economy and society, as well as contribute significantly to the achievement of several SDGs.

This study set up two research questions and two research objectives to carry out this study.

### 1.3. Research Questions

- How will Padma Bridge play a significant role in boosting the SDG goals of Bangladesh?
- In which arena of Padma Bridge do global media pay attention?

### 1.4. Research Objectives

- To investigate the role of Padma Bridge to enhance the SDG goals of Bangladesh by 2030;
- To find out the global media coverage of the opening of Padma Bridge.

### 1.5. Literature Review

In today's global economy, success in overall economic development requires efficient transport, water management, energy production, waste management systems, and digital communication. The construction of the Padma Bridge presents numerous opportunities for the development of Bangladesh, particularly in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. With the smooth and improved communication enabled by the bridge, Bangladesh will be better equipped to achieve its SDG targets. However, further research is needed to fully understand the potential impact of the bridge on the country's economic and social development. While there have been some studies and newspaper articles exploring the subject, a more comprehensive and in-depth research is required to inform effective policy and decision-making.

According to [Mahmood \(2022\)](#), Bangladesh aspires to become a socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and economically prosperous nation by the year 2041. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of objectives that Bangladesh's government has been steadfastly trying to achieve by 2030. The self-financed Padma Bridge is the most notable of the many achievements Bangladesh has made under the vibrant leadership of Sheikh Hasina. The Padma Bridge, which was self-funded, will help achieve SDGs and Vision 2041. The study identifies a variety of beneficial effects for Bangladesh's socioeconomic development and exceptional GDP growth rates. The Padma Multipurpose Bridge will also make a significant contribution to Bangladesh's overall growth and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 ([Jalil and Mia 2021](#)).

This Bridge is essential to improving people's quality of life and means of subsistence. By 2030, the UN's SDGs will be more likely to be achieved thanks to the bridge. Economists predict that the opening of the Padma Bridge will result in a decline in the nation's overall poverty rate. They predicted that, if the environment for investment and communication is improved, the poverty rate in this region will decrease by approximately 1% yearly, and the national poverty rate would decrease by 0.84% annually. Thus, our population's income will increase ([Dhaka Tribune 2022](#)). Locals would have easier access to Dhaka's medical facilities thanks to the bridge. With less erosion and less vulnerability among those who have been displaced by erosion, the economy of the char lands in the Padma River channel, which is based mostly on agriculture, fishing, and livestock-rearing, would benefit ([Alam 2022a](#)).

The Padma Bridge, according to [Islam et al. \(2010\)](#), is designed to significantly reduce travel time and expense over the river and increase cross-Padma transit dependability. The bridge will drastically save travel times and decrease the distance from the southwest to Dhaka by 100 km. Domestic and foreign tourists will swarm to new and historic tourist destinations, including Kuakata Beach in the southern region, the Sundarbans, the sixty-domed mosque, Bangabandhu Mazar in Tungipara, and historic and modern resorts at Mawa and Jazira, as the tourism industry will flourish.

Padma Bridge has an extremely high benefit–cost ratio. We will profit substantially from reduced travel time. Furthermore, an improved connection will assist with connecting the country's backward regions to the rest of the country. It will be a significant boost to

the growth of our local agriculture and industries. It would also connect our second most significant port, at Mongla, and the Khulna industrial zone. Padma Bridge will connect to the Asian Highway and the trans-Asian railway ([Daily Star 2020](#)). According to the feasibility assessment, the project will not only boost the country's GDP by 1.2 percent but also improve by 2.3 percent in the south-western area.

The ease of transportation will open up new economic prospects in the agricultural and industrial sectors ([Khan and Naher 2021](#)). This will create a new investment hub for both domestic and foreign investors, leading to the construction of new industrial units and countless job opportunities. As the need for labour rises, there will be greater recruiting, reskilling, or up skilling of the labour force to meet industrial demands, as well as a probable salary increase. Greater economic prospects will eventually reduce poverty, enhance living standards, and provide intergenerational gains by making education and healthcare more affordable. Aside from transportation, other factors that will change include the general cost of manufacturing products and services, the carrying out of economic activities, and the development of new activities ([Jalil and Mia 2021](#)). Although bridges are intended to accelerate present growth, they will also have an impact on long-term advancement.

### *1.6. Research Gap*

While the Padma Bridge in Bangladesh has received extensive coverage in the country's media, there is a lack of research on the representation of the bridge in global media news. While some studies have explored the political and economic dimensions of the bridge project, little is known about how the global media has portrayed the bridge and its significance in the context of Bangladesh's development and infrastructure initiatives. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate how the global media has covered the Padma Bridge project and how this coverage has influenced international perceptions of the project and its impact on the region. This research could contribute to a better understanding of the role of global media in shaping public opinion and informing international policy discussions on infrastructure and development in Bangladesh and other developing countries. Therefore, further research is needed to evaluate the nature and tone of global media coverage of the Padma Bridge project, as well as assess how this coverage may shape international perceptions of Bangladesh and its economic and infrastructure development. Such research could inform efforts to improve the visibility and reputation of Bangladesh's development initiatives and support the country's efforts to attract foreign investment, as well as support infrastructure development.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

There are three theoretical aspects—Representation, Media framing, and Globalization—that are relevant to this study.

### *2.1. Representation Theory*

Representation theory refers to the idea that how people and events are represented in media can shape how people perceive them in society. This theory suggests that media representations have the power to influence cultural norms and attitudes toward certain groups or issues ([Hall 1997](#)). When it comes to the coverage of the Padma Bridge by the world media, representation theory is particularly relevant. How the bridge and the people involved in its construction are represented in media can have a significant impact on how people perceive them and the project more broadly. For example, if the media primarily focuses on foreign aid and investment in the construction of the bridge, it may perpetuate the idea that Bangladesh is a dependent and economically disadvantaged country. This framing could lead to negative attitudes toward Bangladesh and its ability to develop without external support. On the other hand, if the media highlights the expertise and hard work of local engineers, construction workers, and other stakeholders, it could challenge negative stereotypes about Bangladesh and shift the narrative toward a more positive representation of the country and its capabilities.

Representation theory also suggests that the media has the power to shape perceptions of certain groups involved in the project, such as government officials or construction workers. For example, if the media frames the government officials involved in the project as corrupt or incompetent, it could lead to negative attitudes toward them and erode trust in the government. Alternatively, if the media emphasizes the hard work and dedication of construction workers, it could lead to more positive attitudes toward the construction industry and its workers. Overall, representation theory highlights the importance of how the Padma Bridge and its stakeholders are represented in media coverage. The media has the power to shape public perceptions of the project and its stakeholders, and as such, media coverage must be fair, accurate, and free from negative stereotypes or biases.

## 2.2. Media Framing Theory

Media framing theory can be used to analyse how global media outlets framed their coverage of the inauguration day of the Padma Bridge in Bangladesh. According to media framing theory, how news is presented can influence the way that audiences understand and interpret events. One way that global media outlets framed their coverage of the Padma Bridge inauguration day was through a focus on the economic benefits of the project. Many news outlets highlighted the potential increase in trade and investment opportunities that the bridge will create, and they emphasized the role of the bridge in stimulating economic growth and development in Bangladesh. Another way that global media outlets framed their coverage of the Padma Bridge inauguration day was through a focus on the political implications of the project. Several news outlets highlighted the symbolic importance of the bridge as a national infrastructure project and emphasized the role of the project in promoting national unity and pride. This framing is consistent with a nationalist perspective, which emphasizes the importance of national identity and sovereignty (Mass Communication Theory 2017). Finally, some global media outlets framed their coverage of the Padma Bridge inauguration day through a focus on the potential negative consequences of the project. For example, some news outlets highlighted concerns about corruption and mismanagement in the construction process, while others raised concerns about the environmental impact of the bridge construction. This framing is consistent with a critical perspective, which emphasizes the importance of questioning and scrutinizing development projects and their potential impact (Goffman 1974).

## 2.3. Globalization Theory

Globalization theory is a useful lens through which to understand the relationship between the Padma Bridge and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh. The theory of globalization posits that economic and social activities are becoming increasingly integrated on a global scale with the growth of international trade, investment, and communication (Reyes 2001). In the context of Bangladesh, the construction of the Padma Bridge represents a major investment in infrastructure that is intended to enhance economic integration and connectivity within the country. By providing improved transportation infrastructure, the bridge will facilitate the movement of goods and people between different regions of the country and support the growth of regional trade and investment. This increased economic integration is expected to contribute to several of the SDGs, including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure).

According to Reyes (2001, p. 8), globalization theory also recognizes that there are potential negative consequences of economic integration, particularly for marginalized communities and the environment. The construction of the Padma Bridge has raised concerns about its potential impact on the local environment and the communities that rely on the Padma River for their livelihoods. To ensure that the construction of the Padma Bridge supports sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs, it is important to take a holistic approach that addresses both the economic benefits and the potential negative consequences. This may involve implementing measures to mitigate

the environmental impact of the bridge construction and ensuring that the benefits of the bridge are distributed fairly across different communities and social groups. Globalization theory provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between the Padma Bridge and the SDGs in Bangladesh. While the bridge has the potential to contribute to economic integration and the achievement of several SDGs, it is important to address the potential negative consequences and ensure that the benefits of the bridge are distributed fairly. By taking a holistic approach to development, it is possible to achieve sustainable and inclusive development that benefits all members of society.

### 3. Materials and Methods

This study applied a mixed-mode approach that was both qualitative and quantitative. The convenience sampling technique has been used to gather news articles from globally recognized newspapers and television channels that covered the opening of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge from 1 June 2022 to 30 June 2022 and the specially inaugurated date 25 June 2022. In this way, the Google customization search bar was used to find out the global news treatment of Padma Bridge. Then, the content analysis method was used to scrutinize different secondary data sources such as newspaper articles, opinion pieces, and research articles related to the bridge, as well as government reports and reports from the Bangladesh Planning Commission and Finance Ministry on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Bangladesh.

### 4. Discussion

For the country's 170 million citizens, the Padma Bridge represents a fulfilment of a dream. By building the Padma Bridge with its funds, the Bangladeshi government has set an example for other South Asian nations, which will undoubtedly inspire other nations to step up and undertake similar projects of this scale to improve regional connectivity. Many media outlets from various nations have varied opinions on the Padma Bridge problem. Some international media consider it to be one of Bangladesh's greatest triumphs, while others view it as a source of pride (Tapley et al. 2010). The capacity of the Bangladeshi administration to realize a dream in the face of several obstacles is also mentioned by certain other international media.

There was almost 32 published pieces by different countries' news media on the issue of opening the Padma Bridge. The selected news was from different world-class news media such as ABC News, VoA ALJAZEERA, AP News, Arab News, Bloomberg, The Economic Times, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu, NDTV, Washington Post, AFP, Ananda Bazar, BBC News, Pakistani newspaper DAWN, Independent, Tribune Pakistan (Mahmud 2022a; Talukdar 2022a) as well as Indian media such as Indian Express and Tribune India, and the Malaysian newspaper, The Malaysian Insight, published stories quoting AFP, while The Washington Post quoted AP in their story and so on. All the selected news is given below, with the date and detailed headline in a table, for easy understanding. The list of the global media names, their countries, date and headlines are presented in Table 1.

The table presents the selected news and detailed headlines where some news media, such as ABC, ALJAZEERA, AFP, and AP News, says that the issue of the opening of Bangladesh's longest bridge—especially according to ALJAZEERA—is a dream come true for 170 MN people of Bangladesh. The Economic Times calls it a symbol of the country's pride. India Today also headlined their news as, 'Bangladesh's Padma Bridge inaugurated: Here's how PM Sheikh Hasina turned adversity into opportunity'. Additionally, other world media like ZEE News and WION TV reported news on the Padma Bridge's opening using different interesting headlines (Walia 2022; ZEE NEWS 2022; NEWS18Bangla 2022).

**Table 1.** Global Media News Headlines on the Padma Bridge.

Sl. No.:	Name of the Media	Country's Name	Publication Date	The Headline of the News
01	ABC News	USA	25 June 2022	Bangladesh marks the opening of the country's longest bridge
02	ALJAZEERA	Qatar	25 June 2022	PM Hasina opens Bangladesh's longest bridge over River Padma
03	ALJAZEERA	Qatar	25 June 2022	A dream come true for 170 MN people of Bangladesh
04	AFP	France	25 June 2022	Bangladesh opens bridge plagued by graft claims, lynchings
05	AP News	USA	25 June 2022	Bangladesh marks the opening of the country's longest bridge
06	ARAB NEWS	Saudi Arab	25 June 2022	Bangladesh inaugurates USD 3.6 billion Padma Bridge
07	Bloomberg	USA	25 June 2022	Bangladesh unveils bridge shunned by World Bank a decade ago
08	The Indian Express	India	25 June 2022	PM Hasina opens Bangladesh's longest bridge, calling it a symbol of the country's pride
09	Hindustan Times	India	26 June 2022	Bangladesh's Padma Bridge is a Chinese success story, claims media
10	THE HINDU	India	19 June 2022	Padma Bridge project was entirely funded by Bangladesh government ( <a href="#">Bhattacharjee 2022</a> )
11	NDTV	India	18 June 2022	Bangladesh Says Padma Bridge Not Part Of China's Belt and Road Initiative
12	NDTV	India	25 June 2022	PM Sheikh Hasina Inaugurates Bangladesh's Longest Rail-Road Bridge
13	The Washington Post	USA	25 June 2022	Bangladesh marks the opening of the country's longest bridge
14	VOA NEWS	USA	25 June 2022	Bangladesh Unveils Padma River Bridge
15	Daily Times	Pakistan	25 June 2022	Story Of Bangladesh's Padma Bridge: More Than Just A Bridge?
16	The Indian Express	India	25 June 2022	Bangladesh awaits its bridge of dreams across the mighty Padma
17	India Today	India	26 June 2022	Bangladesh's Padma Bridge inaugurated: Here's how PM Sheikh Hasina turned adversity into opportunity
18	Ananda Bazar Online	India	25 June 2022	The Padma bridge will inaugurate, wake up at night in Bangladesh! The Padma Bridge will not only reduce the distance between Kolkata and Dhaka.
19	BBC NEWS BANGLA	UK	25 June 2022	Padma Bridge: Inaugurated by SheikhHasnia, one-third of Bangladesh is connected to Dhaka by road
20	China Daily.Com.CN	China	28 June 2022	China-made bridge opens in Bangladesh
21	NEWS18Bangla	India	27 June 2022	Padma Bridge: Bangladesh's Longest Bridge to Cut Dhaka-Kolkata Travel Time By Half
22	ZEE News	India	26 June 2022	PM Sheikh Hasina inaugurates Bangladesh's longest Padma Bridge, to cut Dhaka-Kolkata travel time
23	R.REPUBLICWORLD.COM	Russia	25 June 2022	India Comments Bangladesh On Completion Of Padma Bridge: 'Testimony of Far-sightedness' ( <a href="#">Das 2022</a> )

Table 1. Cont.

Sl. No.:	Name of the Media	Country's Name	Publication Date	The Headline of the News
24	The Federal	South Korea	20 June 2022	Dhaka, Seoul snub China's claim on Padma Bridge in Bangladesh
25	Asia Times	Hong Kong	29 June 2022	Bangladeshis welcome the new Padma Bridge
26	WION TV	India	29 June 2022	Grand project: Finally, Bangladesh unveils multipurpose bridge on Padma River
27	Gulf News	Saudi Arab	25 June 2022	Bangladesh opens bridge plagued by graft claims, lynchings ( <a href="#">Gulf News 2022</a> )
28	Khaleej Times	UAE	25 June 2022	Bangladesh: PM Hasina opens country's longest bridge ( <a href="#">Khaleej Times 2022</a> )
29	The Malaysian Insight	Malaysia	25 June 2022	Bangladesh opens bridge plagued by graft claims, lynchings ( <a href="#">The Malaysian Insight 2022</a> ).
30	Pakistan Today	Pakistan	25 June 2022	The Padma Bridge Proves Bangladeshi Economic Potential ( <a href="#">Talukdar 2022b</a> )
31	The Seattle Times	USA	25 June 2022	Bangladesh marks the opening of the country's longest bridge ( <a href="#">Alam 2022b</a> )
32	Global Times	China	26 June 2022	Chinese-built biggest bridge in Bangladesh opens, to boost local GDP growth

Several of the world's top media outlets reported on the Padma Bridge in Bangladesh. According to a Bloomberg article, Bangladesh successfully finished the bridge project that the World Bank abandoned ten years prior. The US media not only mentioned Sheikh Hasina's—success but also that this bridge will contribute to raising the GDP of the nation. The longest bridge in Bangladesh, according to the Associated Press (AP), was opened today ([AP 2022](#)). The research also highlights the Padma Bridge's political and economic relevance in addition to its building approach.

On the other side, according to NDTV, Bangladesh's longest railway bridge was officially opened by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ([NDTV 2022](#)). In addition, the announcement of the Padma Bridge made headlines in the Indian media outlets Hindustan Times, Times of India, and Anandabazar. The Bangladeshi "Bridge of Dreams of 160 Million People" was mentioned, and congratulations for the inaugural event and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership were given ([Sutirth 2022](#)). The media praised India for its accomplishment in constructing an amazing bridge across the Ganges. The French news agency, Gulf News in the Middle East, and the Khaleej Times, among many others, have all produced illustrated articles about the Padma Bridge ([AFP 2022](#)).

The Global Media Says Padma Bridge is:

- The Boldness of Bangladesh: There is some news from different media which shows the boldness of Bangladesh, such as ABC news saying 'Bangladesh marks the opening of the country's longest bridge' ([Alam 2022a](#)), ALJAZEERA saying 'PM Hasina opens Bangladesh's longest bridge over River Padma' ([AL Jazeera 2022](#)), Arab News saying 'Bangladesh inaugurates USD 3.6 billion Padma Bridge' etc. ([ARAB NEWS 2022](#)). The AP, Bloomberg, The Hindu, NDTV, The Washing Post, etc., show the boldness of Bangladesh through their report. Some, such as BBC and VOA news, say that the Padma Bridge is a mega project for Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh as a Role Model: Some world media presents the opening of Padma Bridge as Bangladesh becoming a role model for the developing countries of the world, as the AFP and Al JAZEERA describe in their news. India Today says, 'Bangladesh's Padma Bridge inaugurated: Here's how PM Sheikh Hasina turned adversity into opportunity' which also represents Bangladesh as a role model ([Khokon 2022](#)).

- **Dreams Fulfilment:** The Padma Bridge opening is a fulfilment of a dream for the people of Bangladesh, according to some other world news media. ‘A dream come true for 170 MN people of Bangladesh,’ said AL JAZEERA. ‘Story of Bangladesh’s Padma Bridge: More than Just a Bridge?’ said by Daily Times. The Indian Express defined it as ‘Bangladesh awaits its bridge of dreams across the mighty Padma’, and some other world media says it is a fulfilment of a dream and GDP growth ([AL Jazeera 2022](#); [Global Times 2022](#); [The Indian Express 2022](#)).
- **Ability of Bangladesh:** The ability of Bangladesh is also shown in some world media, such as Bloomberg, The Hindu, India Today, etc. Bloomberg says ‘Bangladesh unveils a bridge shunned by the World Bank a decade ago’ (Devnath 2022, which shows the ability of Bangladesh. The Indian media named The Hindu also describes the opening of Padma Bridge as the ‘Padma Bridge project was entirely funded by Bangladesh government’, which mainly reflects the availability of Bangladesh government. ‘Bangladesh’s Padma Bridge inaugurated: Here’s how PM Sheikh Hasina turned adversity into opportunity’ by India Today is also a symbol of Bangladesh’s ability to tackle mega projects ([Alam 2022b](#)).
- **Pride and Opportunity for the Country’s People:** The Economic Times has made its news headline as, ‘PM Hasina opens Bangladesh’s longest bridge, calls it a symbol of country’s pride’, which presents the Padma Bridge opening as a pride for the people of Bangladesh. The Ananda Bazar, BBC News, China Daily, and The News Page also call it a pride and opportunity for the people of Bangladesh because the opening of Padma Bridge is a symbol of pride, and it will also create opportunity for the people of Bangladesh ([Global Times 2022](#); [Kun and Zhou 2022](#)).

## 5. How Padma Bridge Helps to Boost the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Making tremendous progress on the SDGs will be made feasible thanks to the bridge. One of the areas with the greatest fees of poverty is the southwest. By launch, the poor, who would make up a large quantity of the direct benefits, will account for up to 55% of the passengers now crossing the Padma River. The bridge will improve neighborhood residents’ right to entry to clinical services in Dhaka. ([Daily Star 2020](#)). By 2041, Bangladesh hopes to be a socially inclusive, ecologically sustainable, and economically affluent nation ([Alam 2022c](#)). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being constantly pursued by the Bangladeshi government. The independently funded Padma Bridge will be a resource in attaining SDGs and Vision 2041 ([Mahmood 2022](#)). According to the Policy Research Institute’s studies, the Padma Bridge may additionally propel Bangladesh’s development industry’s improvement by 29%, the agricultural sector’s increase by means of 9.5%, and the industrial and transportation sectors’ boom with the aid of 8% ([Mahmood 2022](#)). Overall, the Padma Bridge is expected to have a significant impact on Bangladesh’s progress toward achieving the SDGs, contributing to economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability.

The construction of the Padma Bridge in Bangladesh is expected to contribute to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. These goals include:

- **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDGs 9)**

The construction of the Padma Bridge is, itself, an infrastructure project that will contribute to the achievement of this SDG. By improving transportation networks, the bridge will facilitate the movement of people and goods, as well as support the development of new industries and businesses.

### 5.1. Industrial Revolution in 21 Districts

The planned building of the Padma Bridge is anticipated to yield an Economic Rate of Return (ERR) on funding of 18 to 22% annually, with difficulty in growth. As the connectivity between Dhaka and port cities has weakened, transportation will be fantastic for neighbourhood enterprises. Real property corporations are anticipated to end up notably

and greatly industrialized for agriculture, thanks to factories, mega factories, hospitals, colleges, and housing facilities. There are plans to set up motel businesses in Barisal, shipwrecking companies in the two seaports, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) station enterprises. The hub of newly set up firms will, in a similar fashion, be manufacturing companies, RMG, assembling factories, and storage facilities. BSCIC officials estimate that between 500 and 1000 industries of a variety of sorts will be constructed in the districts surrounding Barisal. The district's industrialization, added on using the bridge, is predicted to provide a 2% boom to the country-wide economy. Industrialists assume that areas such as Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Bagerhat, Gopalganj, and Khulna are excellent locations to invest. According to the Barisal Chamber of Commerce, investments of 10,000–20,000 CR taka are expected to be made in places around Barisal during the next 10 years ([Khan and Ali 2021](#)).

### 5.2. Establishing New Travel Routes

The southern region is reduced from the rest of the nation via the Padma. Even though the southern region has viewed high-quality growth in road transportation, a bridge was still integral to maximize the effectiveness of these advancements. The Tamabil–Sylhet–Sorail–Kanchpur–Dhaka–Mawa–Bhatiapara–Norail–Jessore–Benapole route has direct roads ([Khan and Ali 2021](#)).

- Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

The Padma Bridge is expected to create new economic opportunities, particularly in the southern region of the country, which is currently underdeveloped. By improving transportation and communication networks, the bridge will make it easier for businesses to trade and for investors to set up new enterprises, which will contribute to economic growth.

### 5.3. Boosting Connectivity

The travel over the Padma Bridge would take about 4 h. The Padma Bridge will rapidly increase site visitors between Dhaka and Mongla port, which is nearer to Dhaka than Chattogram port and is 170 km instead of 264 km away. Increased freight site visitors between the ports of Dhaka and Mongla will additionally ease congestion at the Chattogram port. The U-shaped shape that connects Dhaka and Jashore through rail is called Jashore. The Dhaka–Jashore rail line through the Bhanga mission will directly connect the “U2”'s ends and improve connectivity in the course of the complete area ([Adhikary 2020](#)).

### 5.4. Tourism Facility

The creation of a group whose uniting ideals will transcend geographical boundaries will be influenced by prevalent cultural interchange. Tourism would also be facilitated via the effortless connection. Both local and foreign vacationers would have handy access to popular traveller locations together with Bangabandhu Mazar, Kuakata Beach, the 60-domed mosque, the Sundarbans, and accommodations in Mawa and Jajira ([Mahmood 2022](#)).—To join supply chains and correctly switch products and services both domestically and internationally, the economy requires reliable infrastructure. Infrastructure connects households to better-quality jobs, healthcare, and academic opportunities across regional boundaries. The Padma Bridge, which has the opportunity to be a game-changing example if other associated selections are made in a way that responds to economic, demographic, fiscal, and environmental changes and promotes the well-being of people, places, and businesses, is crucial for Bangladesh to comprehend its competitive possibilities ([Daily Star 2020](#)).

- Eradication of Hunger and Poverty (SDGs 1 and 2)

The Padma Bridge is expected to improve access to economic opportunities, particularly in the southern region of the country, which is currently one of the poorest areas in Bangladesh. By reducing travel time and improving transportation networks, the bridge is

expected to create new opportunities for trade and investment, which, in turn, can help to reduce poverty.

#### 5.5. Diversifying Business for the Southwest Region

The bridge will assist in creating greater opportunities for both farm and non-farm growth, diversifying agriculture in saline-affected areas, and facilitating commerce between Bangladesh and India. Additionally, it will beautify the jute, textile, shrimp, dairy, and fish processing industries. Farmers will achieve from being in a pleasant position to hold their perishable items, as well as minimize manufacturing expenses owing to transportation and storage amenities via imposing sturdy grant chains. As export zones are greater carefully spaced, exporting agricultural goods will warrant product quality ([Ahmed 2022](#)).

#### 5.6. Expanding Rail Networks

The instruct line, which hyperlinks four districts and makes the Dhaka–Bhanga–Jashore route a part of the Trans-Asian Railway Network, would cut the distance between Dhaka and Jashore by greater than 200 km. Through Benapole in Jashore and Darshana in Chuadanga, Bangladesh and India are connected, and the line will improve conversation with not solely India but, additionally, Nepal and Bhutan ([Adhikary 2020](#)).

#### 5.7. Linking Ports

By connecting Mongla and Paira seaports, the bridge will ease traffic at Chittagong Port. This will promote the usage of these ports through landlocked nations such as Nepal and Bhutan. The bridge will assist in building a multifaceted, international road and rail transportation network for the Indian Subcontinent’s eastern region. It will create a gap in the Trans-Asian Railway and Trans-Asian Highway. These are predicted to raise Bangladesh’s geopolitical significance via remodelling it into a regional centre for growth, connectivity, commerce, and investment ([Mahmood 2022](#)). The Chittagong port’s yearly production was 45 million tons in 2011, with a conceivable upward thrust to 70–80 million tons in 2020. The Chittagong and Mongla ports will no longer be capable of coping with such a massive volume of visitors.

- Education and Health (SDG 3 and 4)

The improved access to healthcare services that the Padma Bridge is expected to provide will contribute to the achievement of this SDG. People living in remote areas will have better access to medical facilities and services, which will improve their health and well-being.

#### 5.8. Human Development Leading to Micro-Level Growth

There will be a dramatic increase in entrepreneurial brains as a result of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge’s many opportunities. Employment opportunities will proliferate. People will invest more in small corporations if they have clean chances. As income is expected to grow, there will be a growth in educated workers. Better healthcare amenities and shorter commuting times will enhance excellent of life. Within 5 years of the bridge’s construction, industrialization may additionally provide jobs to at least 10 lakh people, including up to 30–40 lakh jobs in Barisal over the next 10 years. Issues such as migration will be much less of a difficulty when new offices emerge along the Padma Bridge thanks to increasing industries in Khulna and Barisal. Bangladesh was in position 135 out of 189 nations in the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) published by the UNDP. The bridge that spurs economic increase and demographic shifts will help the kingdom grow closer to reaching the SDGs ([Khan and Naher 2021](#)).

#### 5.9. Macro-Economic Benefits

The Padma Bridge’s post-establishment phase is intended to improve our financial system in a range of ways. A set of analyses supply a prediction of what will manifest next. The traffic model used to be used to calculate the long-term street person benefit. Based

on the savings in each of the fees of working, the car, and the cost of experience time, over the course of 31 years, the estimate came to 1,295,840 million BDT (USD 18,512 million). Additionally, simulation studies on the use of a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) that represented the Padma Bridge's oblique consequences over a 31-year length had been done ([Khan and Ali 2021](#)).

- Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)

The improved access to economic opportunities and basic services that the Padma Bridge is expected to provide will help to reduce inequalities, particularly between urban and rural areas of the country.

#### 5.10. New Opportunities

The introduction of new financial probabilities in neighbouring districts would limit pressure on Dhaka by preventing rural-to-urban migration. Decentralization and gradual growth of smaller cities will be supported with the aid of the expansion of colleges, businesses, and hospitals in the southern area. Despite the truth that the districts have conventional clinics, critical sufferers need to tour Dhaka. Such sufferers will acquire on-the-spot assistance from this bridge in receiving essential care. The bridge will decrease journey times, do away with unemployment, decentralize megacities, and improve small-scale organizations ([Mahmood 2022](#)).

#### 5.11. Women Empower and Padma Bridge

Millions of females residing in the south of the country will see a sizeable trade in their exceptional existence as a result of the Padma Bridge. They will have increased rights of entry to clinical care, educational opportunities, and jobs. Women's movement will be safer and simpler, which will stimulate their involvement in the job market and the provision of services. Women's negotiating energy will change if they obtain economic independence, and they will be better able to utilize their income to sway household decisions. Women's choices will be elevated by way of the bridge, elevating their degree of living. Eventually, it will be guaranteed that ladies in the southern location are not discriminated against and are empowered ([Mahmood 2022](#)).

- Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDGs 11)

The bridge will improve connectivity between rural and urban areas, helping to reduce urbanization pressures and promote sustainable development in both regions.

#### 5.12. Transforming the Lives of 30 M People

The southwest area covers 27% of the nation's population. When compared to other areas, the vicinity has had comparatively little monetary development. Problems added on by local weather changes consist of the loss of lands and enterprises, which have brought on migration ([Khan and Ali 2021](#)). Due to network and local weather challenges, poverty is also pervasive in Padma's outskirts. As a result, the southwest region has a 5% higher rate of people living below the poverty level than the national average. The Padma Bridge will be used to tackle these issues. River coaching activities near the Padma Bridge will help to reduce erosion, which is a significant impediment to migration.

- Climate and Environment (SDGs13)

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, with frequent flooding, cyclones, and other natural disasters. The government has made significant investments in climate adaptation and mitigation measures, but there is still a need for further action.

### 5.13. Environmental Impact

The environment will be affected by the aid of the bridge. Erosion will be controlled through the bridge's river coaching projects. During any herbal catastrophe or flood in the southern area, the bridge will aid in getting useful resources and help to the affected population (BBA 2010).

### 5.14. Climate Action

The Padma Bridge is being constructed with a focus on minimizing its environmental impact and incorporating climate resilience measures. For example, the bridge has been designed to withstand earthquakes and cyclones, which are common in Bangladesh. This will contribute to the country's efforts to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

- Partnerships for the Goals (SDGs17)

The Padma Bridge project is a collaboration between the Bangladesh government and several international organizations, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. This partnership demonstrates the importance of global cooperation and collective action in achieving sustainable development.

### 5.15. Increased International Trade

Bangladesh has already begun to gain investments for establishing organizations shut to the development from the standpoint of global commerce. The most probable pursuits are manufacturing companies, RMG, meeting factories, and storage facilities. The advent of new places of work will result in greater numbers of people working for the government. Exports are expected to increase, as will the wide variety of export import zones, strengthening linkages to the two main seaports. After the project is finished, the authorities will acquire a massive sum in taxes and tolls, growing its revenue. Finally, the bridge will spur the establishment of new worldwide alternate relations, via the authorities, as Bangladesh is about to leave the LDC category (Khan and Ali 2021).

### 5.16. Improved Connectivity

The Padma Bridge will improve connectivity between Bangladesh and other countries in the region, including India, Nepal, and Bhutan. The bridge will provide a direct link between the southwestern region of Bangladesh and the country's main seaports and airports, which will facilitate trade and investment, as well as improve access to international markets.

### 5.17. Enhanced Transport Links

The Padma Bridge is expected to significantly improve transport links between Bangladesh and other countries in the region. The bridge will reduce travel time and improve the efficiency of transport networks, which will facilitate the movement of goods and people across borders and enhance regional economic integration.

Overall, the construction of the Padma Bridge is expected to have a significant impact on the achievement of the SDGs in Bangladesh. By improving access to economic opportunities, healthcare, education, and basic services, the bridge will contribute to the country's efforts to reduce poverty, improve well-being, and achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The Padma Bridge will improve infrastructure, create new employment opportunities, help reduce inequalities and build more sustainable communities. Some of the global newspapers' headlines snapshot are presented in Figures 1–13.

## Picture of global Newspapers

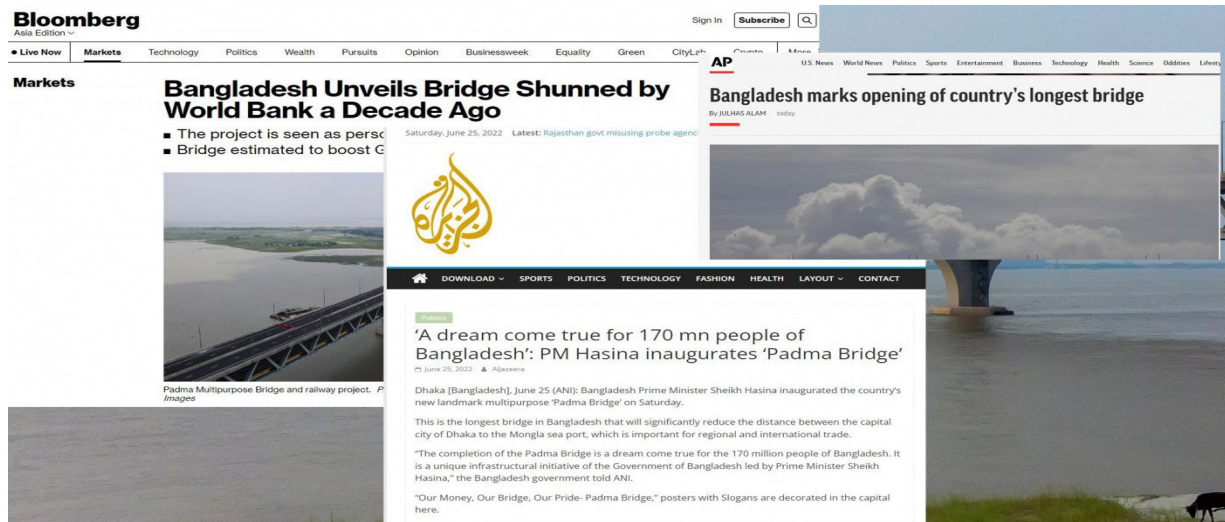


Figure 1. Headlines of Bloomberg, AP, and Al Jazeera (25 June 2022); (Devnath 2022; AP 2022; AL Jazeera 2022).



Figure 2. Headlines of Al Jazeera (25 June 2022); (AL Jazeera 2022).

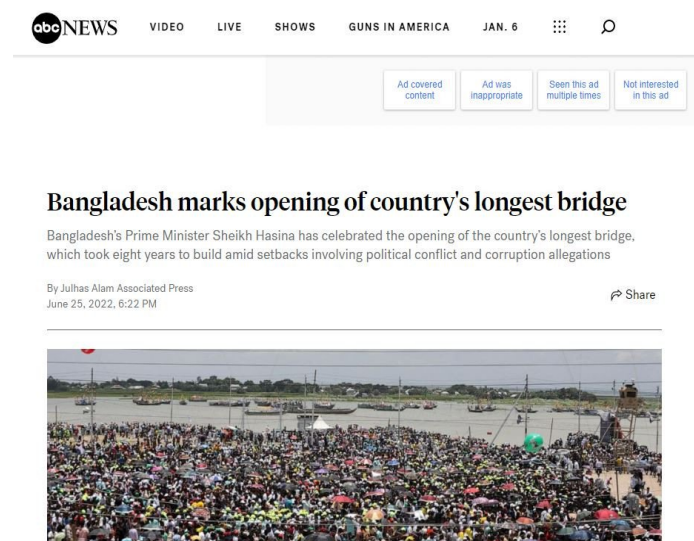


Figure 3. Headlines of ABC NEWS (25 June 2022); (Alam 2022a).

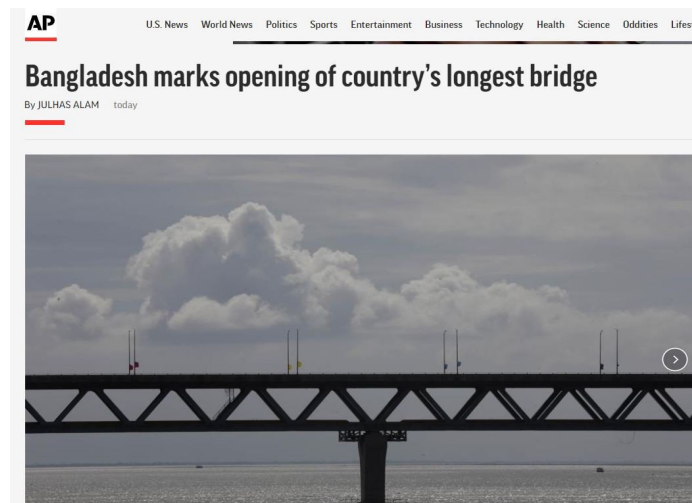


Figure 4. Headlines of AP (25 June 2022); (AP 2022).

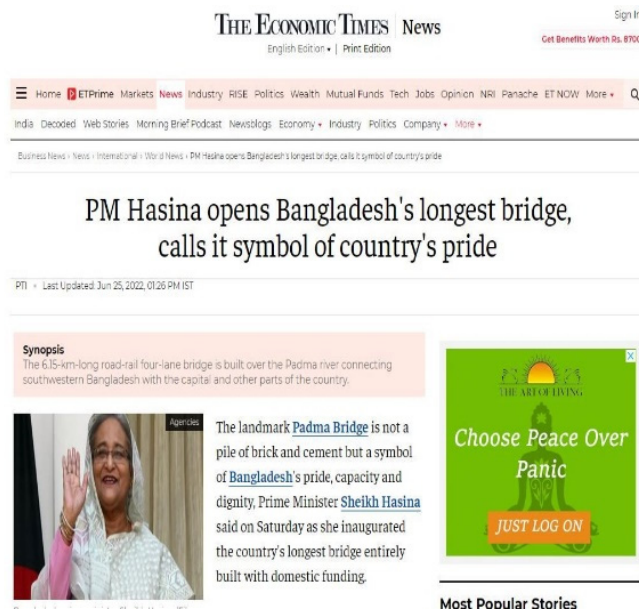


Figure 5. Headlines of The Economic Times (25 June 2022) (The Economic Times 2022).



Figure 6. Headlines of Al Jazeera (25 June 2022) (AL Jazeera 2022).



Figure 7. Headlines of NDTV (25 June 2022); (NDTV 2022).

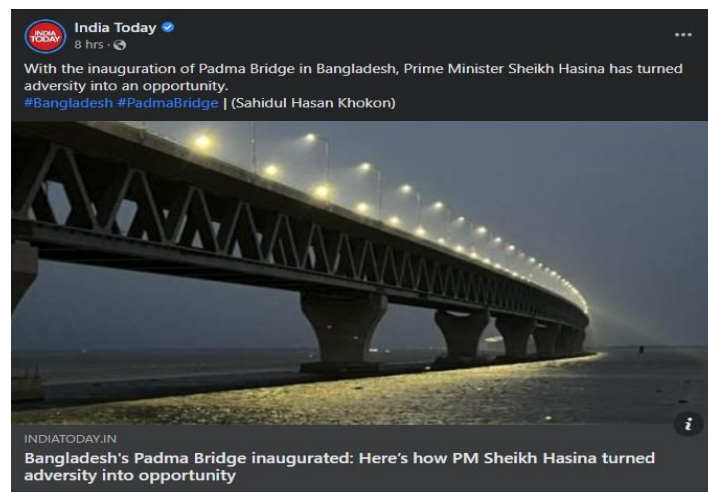


Figure 8. Headlines of India Today (25 June 2022); (Khokon 2022).

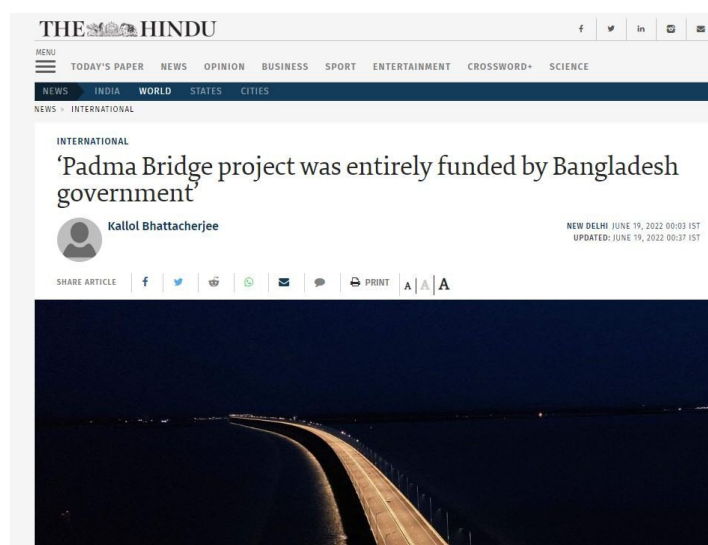


Figure 9. Headlines of THE HINDU (25 June 2022); (Bhattacharjee 2022).

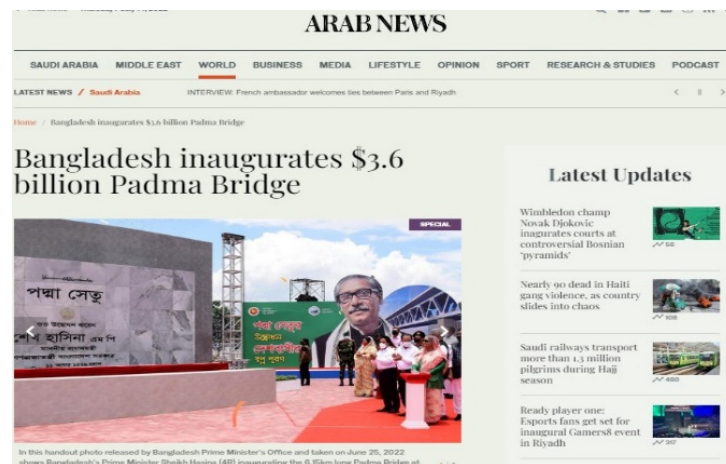


Figure 10. Headlines of ARAB NEWS (25 June 2022); (ARAB NEWS 2022).

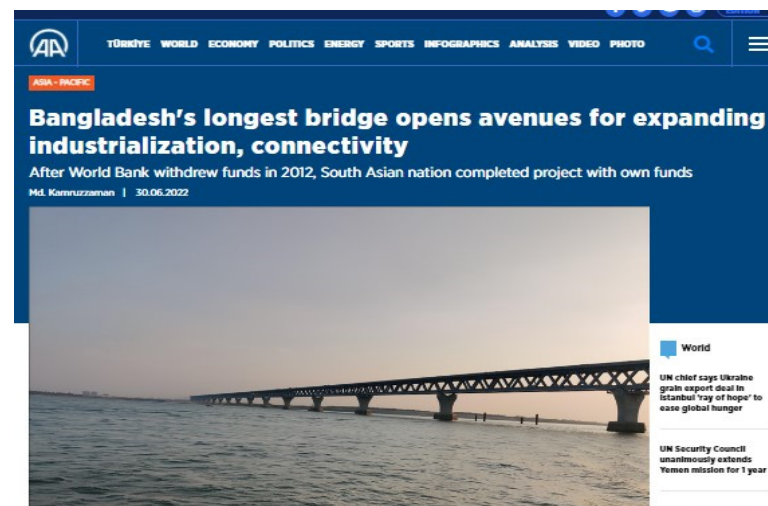


Figure 11. Headlines of Al Jazeera (25 June 2022); (AL Jazeera 2022).

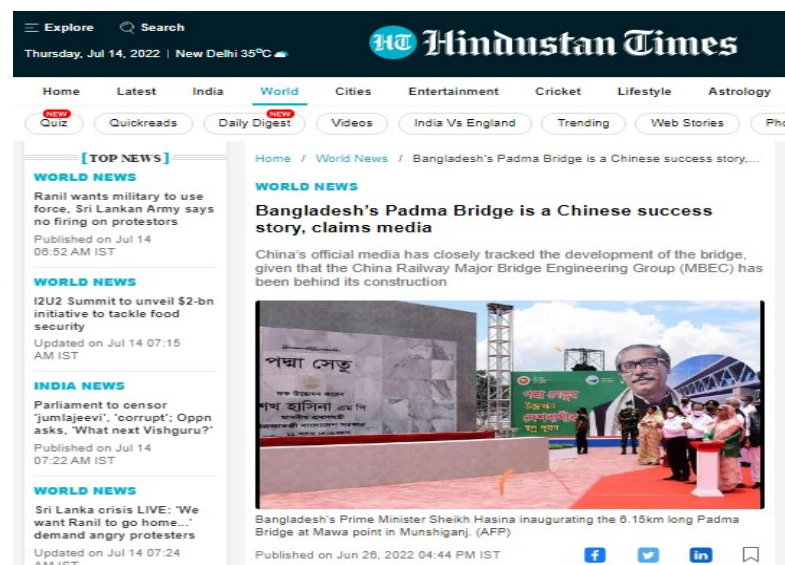


Figure 12. Headlines of Hindustan Times (25 June 2022); (Sutirth 2022).



**Figure 13.** Headlines of VoA (25 June 2022); (Mahmud 2022b).

## 6. Conclusions

The Padma Bridge has garnered significant attention from the global media due to its potential to contribute to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh. Among the primary ways in which the Padma Bridge is contributed to the SDGs is through increased economic growth and development. The bridge will provide improved connectivity and transportation infrastructure, making it easier for people and goods to move between different parts of the country. This increased connectivity is expected to stimulate economic growth and development, particularly in the southern region of Bangladesh where the bridge is located. By increasing economic growth, the bridge has the potential to contribute to several SDGs, including Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). In addition to its economic impact, the Padma Bridge is also expected to have a significant impact on social development in Bangladesh. The bridge will provide improved access to healthcare, education, and other basic services, particularly for those living in rural areas. This increased access to services is expected to contribute to several SDGs, including Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

The global media has played an important role in highlighting the potential impact of the Padma Bridge on the achievement of the SDGs in Bangladesh. By covering bridge construction and its potential impact on economic and social development, the media has helped to raise awareness of the importance of infrastructure development and sustainable development in Bangladesh. The global media has an important role to play in highlighting the potential impact of the bridge and raising awareness of the importance of sustainable development in Bangladesh. In addition, the news coverage of the Padma Bridge by the global media has highlighted the importance of infrastructure development and sustainable development in Bangladesh. While there are challenges and controversies surrounding the project, the potential economic and social benefits of the bridge are significant. The global media has played an important role in raising awareness of the project and its potential impact on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh.

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