

Will the Covid-19 pandemic impact bridge design globally and locally, with emphasis on megaprojects in Bangladesh?

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ABSTRACT: The recent unexpected worldwide pandemic Covid-19 disease has paused the relentless strive for constant growth and increase of life quality and wealth as well as welfare globally. Bangladesh, with its huge and growing population has experienced a significant growth and improvement of life for millions of people over the last decades.

No doubt the improvement of traffic infrastructure by many mega-projects such as the Jamuna River Bridge built previous century and the ongoing construction of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, the Kharnaphuli Tunnel in Chittagong, the Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway project and the planned Dhaka Subway Project are responsible for a great part of the improvement in communication and trade and thereby the improvement of the quality of life in Bangladesh.

However, the threatening pandemic has caused a sudden stop for many activities. All of the sudden we got time to think: Will the result of the pandemic crisis only cause a temporary dip in the exponential growth and society resume the previous growth profile? - or will the reflection time lead to a radically different development of society and therefore also development of transport infrastructure more permanently? It will be necessary and natural for our profession and bridge engineers to ask ourselves to which extent the potential change will, or should lead to a different approach in the future. The changes may have an impact on types and selection of civil engineering structures, bridges, materials, resources etc.. Priorities may change as well as the lifestyles and societal behavioral change. At the same time the global climate challenges, population growth and sustainability requirements, the 17 UN goals etc. superimpose the corona-crisis influence and make the situation extremely complicated. It is the hope that my contribution will stimulate fruitful discussions amongst us professionals and bridge engineers, so we together may seek and identify the way forward in order to make our contribution to a meaningful development and contribution to the future society.