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# CPA News

Premier Maritime Magazine of Bangladesh

**Exclusive interview with the  
State Minister, Ministry of Shipping**

**Mongla- a growing port, building the  
gateway of transhipment**

Hydrography to harness  
the potential  
of the Blue Economy

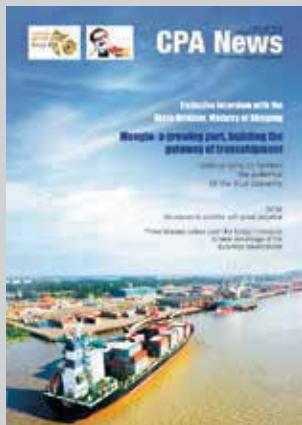
BCIM  
An economic corridor with great potential

Prime Minister called upon the foreign investors  
to take advantage of the  
business environment



**CPA News**

A Quarterly Publication of  
Chittagong Port Authority



**Chief Adviser**

Rear Admiral M Shahjahan  
NPP, BCGMS, ndc, psc, (BN)

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Zafar Alam

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Enamul Karim  
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**Reporter**

Omar Faroque Emon

**Managing Editor**

Monir H Khan

**Public Relation**

Md. Shafiqul Azam Khan  
A.N.M Faruk Hossain Chowdhury

**Photography**

SM Shamsul Huda

**Design & DTP**

Toufique Ahmed  
Abida Hafsa  
Mahmud Hossain Prince  
Mirza Nayeem Oliullah

**Production Logistics**

Habibur Rahman, Alia Ferdoushi

On behalf of CPA

**Content Development, Writing,  
Editing, Design & Publication:**

**ENLIGHTEN | VIBES**

House 06, Road 03, Sector 05  
Uttara, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh.  
Tel: +880 02-48956748  
Email: enlightenvibes@gmail.com

**Editorial Communique**

**CPA News**

Chittagong Port Authority  
Bandar bhaban, Chattogram  
Tel: 031-2510869  
Email: bandarbarta@gmail.com

## Editorial

### Mongla port is becoming more attractive to the port users

New Year's greetings! CPA News has been around for six years. This publication provides interested readers, including the worldwide port community and stakeholders, with the opportunity to stay informed on Bangladesh's maritime sector. As it enters its seventh year, the publication pledges to raise awareness of the maritime sector among the general public by showcasing all domestic and international best practices regularly.

The importance of the Mongla port is growing as a result of development initiatives such as the Padma bridge, the Rampal coal-based power plant, and the construction of an economic zone in the country's south-western region. Mongla is converting from a neglected port to an essential gateway for the country's import-export trade, thanks to the government's timely development plan and implementation. In this regard, the journey of Mongla port, which is currently undergoing necessary development, is highlighted in our lead article.

On 6 January 2019, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP assumed office as the Honourable State Minister in the Ministry of Shipping. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Shipping played an important role in keeping Bangladesh's shipping and economy afloat, issuing necessary and far-reaching directives such as keeping seaports open 24/7. In this issue, he gave an exclusive interview to CPA News about his professional experience, as well as the challenges, opportunities and accomplishments of the shipping sector.

Bangladesh Navy has been tasked with the vital task of conducting maritime surveys, while the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is in charge of conducting inland water surveys. The country's seaport authorities are also in charge of surveying the territories under their authority. The activities and cooperation of the country's hydrographic organisations, as well as other river and sea users, was highlighted in the 'Perspective' section of this issue.

The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, a regional economic corridor spearheaded by China, will facilitate regional connectivity. It is anticipated to open up new possibilities for Bangladesh's economic development if it is approved. The BCIM Economic Corridor was highlighted in our article in the 'Horizon' section as a potential source of large employment opportunities and GDP growth for Bangladesh.

Furthermore, the 'News Bytes' section will keep you up to date on all key marine events and developments from the previous year's final quarter.

We gratefully accept your useful reviews and suggestions for new ways to enhance this maritime publication. Thank you for being with us all along, and please continue to be with us.

Thank you so much.

**Zafar Alam**

Editor



## Lead Story

### Mongla- a growing port, building the gateway of transshipment

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The journey of Mongla port began on 1 December 1950. The port eventually grew to be Bangladesh's second busiest, handling three types of shipments: cargo, containerised commodities and automobiles. The port has had its ups and downs, but it is now a commercially sustainable enterprise. In the backdrop of Bangladesh's historical and contemporary international maritime trade, the 'Lead Story' narrates a story of the port's beginnings, challenges and accomplishments.

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04 Exclusive Interview



**"The maritime sector is one of the prime factors to make Bangladesh a developed country" –**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP**  
State Minister, Ministry of Shipping  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

In our country, the role of the Ministry of Shipping as a ministry has always been significant. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ran the ministry for a time after the independence. Bangabandhu had long-term plans for the growth of this industry. Under the direction of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP, State Minister of the Ministry of Shipping, has been pushing Bangabandhu's maritime vision. He gave CPA News an exclusive interview in which he addressed the Ministry of Shipping's activities, accomplishments and future ambitions.

## News Bytes

18 Maritime business, logistics, connectivity and infrastructure

- The Honourable Prime Minister inaugurated the Payra bridge
- In the third phase, Chittagong Port Authority has given incentives to 6,752 workers
- Port's territory is free from piracy: ReCAAP
- The Honourable Prime Minister called upon the foreign investors to take advantage of the business environment
- CPA has relaxed the cut-off time for export containers for more three months
- CPA has handled a record number of export containers
- The Honourable Prime Minister has directed to set up Matarbari Development Authority
- New service jetty at the port
- Officials and employees of the Chittagong Port Authority took an oath with the Honourable Prime Minister to build a developed country
- Bangladesh-India shipping secretary-level meeting held in New Delhi
- Ships of Bangladesh have a greater share in the transportation of goods under the PIWTT
- Ships will now directly sail between Italy and Chittagong port
- A Memorandum of Understanding signed between Thai Port Authority and Chittagong Port Authority
- Captain Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman is the new board member of Chittagong Port Authority
- and more...

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## Horizon



Trade between Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar is currently not performing as predicted. According to analysts, the BCIM Economic Corridor will be able to give the region's trade the needed boost. To inform our readers, the 'Horizon' section delves into the origins, challenges, and current state of the BCIM Economic Corridor.

12 Hydrography to harness the potential of the Blue Economy

## Perspective



Hydrographic survey data is essential for discovering offshore mineral reserves, aquaculture, fisheries, biodiversity, shipping and conducting research activities aimed at developing environment-friendly and sustainable new solutions to enhance productivity. Hydrography is fundamental to ensuring the full promise of the Blue Economy. This article serves as an eye-opener for readers who want to learn more about the hydrography activities of several organisations in Bangladesh.



# **“The maritime sector is one of the prime factors to make Bangladesh a developed country”**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP**

*State Minister, Ministry of Shipping  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*

Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP became the State Minister in the Ministry of Shipping on 6 January 2019 under the 11th Bangladesh National Parliament. One year later, the world economy was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Shipping has played its due role in keeping the shipping and economy of Bangladesh afloat even in that situation, with appropriate and far-reaching directions including keeping the seaports open. The State Minister for Shipping spoke to CPA News in detail about his work experience, challenges, possibilities and achievements of the shipping sector.



**The role of the Ministry of Shipping as a ministry has always been important in our country. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself ran the ministry for some time after the independence. Bangabandhu had far-reaching thoughts regarding the development of this sector. How would you evaluate Bangabandhu's ideas and plans surrounding the shipping sector?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** No one else could realise the potentials of this riverine country like the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His work holds the evidence of that. For a while after independence, he kept the Ministry of Shipping in his hand. He inspired the ministry's diverse efforts and ideas.

Bangabandhu was the architect of our maritime vision. In 1974, he laid the foundation for future maritime Bangladesh by introducing the Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act. On that basis, under the able leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, the maritime boundary dispute with Myanmar was settled in 2012 and with India in 2014. Through this, sovereign rights have been established in the water column, seabed, and subsoil of 118,813 square kilometres in the Bay of Bengal, which is equal to 81% of the mainland of Bangladesh. This achievement has opened up new possibilities to take Bangladesh's economic growth to another level by exploiting the Blue Economy. We have been able to identify some areas of the Blue Economy. Initiatives have also been taken to identify the remaining potential areas and utilise them.

During Bangabandhu's time, the journey of the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation started with 19 ships. Then, by going in the opposite direction, in 2010 the number of ships stood at 2. Under the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation has turned the corner again. There was no deep seaport in Bangladesh. Now, a deep seaport is being constructed at Matarbari in Cox's Bazar, which will cost Tk 17,777.16 crore. Payra port is already a reality today. Ships from different countries of the world are coming to Mongla port. The foundation of all this has been laid by the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

**The shipping policy of the Ministry of Shipping is two decades old. Do you think it is time to formulate a new shipping policy to meet the challenges of the 21st century?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** As a riverine and coastal country, we need to

have a modern and up-to-date shipping policy. It is needed for freight and passenger transport, maritime tourism, and international commodity trade. Besides, the shipping sector of the country has been playing an important role in job creation and revenue generation. The maritime transport sector is one of the prime factors of the implementation of the Prime Minister's goal of making Bangladesh a developed country by 2041. With that goal in mind, there has been talk of updating the national shipping policy. In this regard, a team will be formed and the shipping policy will be updated so that we can fulfill the new responsibilities assigned to us properly and efficiently.

**As a member of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), a UN specialised agency in the maritime field, Bangladesh has braced more than two dozen conventions. Compliance with these conventions is a matter of competence. What is Bangladesh's policy in this regard?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Bangladesh is very sincere about strict adherence to international rules and regulations in the maritime sector. We have already supported 25 IMO conventions. Take, for example, the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). According to the convention, accredited public and private institutions carry out the task of training and testing sailors and issuing certificates. The Department of Shipping is assessing whether these works are being carried out as per the convention and reports are being sent to the IMO from time to time. Another important certificate enacted by the IMO is the International Maritime Search and Rescue Convention. Bangladesh is the 97th country that signed the convention. As a result, there is now an opportunity to help a ship in case it is in danger in the waters of Bangladesh. Although we have been doing this work before, the signing of the convention has given it international recognition and improved the image of Bangladesh. As a result, the arrival of foreign ships in Bangladesh is being further encouraged. In 2018, we backed the International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships, 2001 (AFS 2001) and the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships on Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM 2004). We are also trying to comply with these conventions by increasing our capacity.

**The lion's share of our industries is Dhaka-centric. Moreover, the capacity of Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD) is not enough to cope with the current rate**

**of import-export growth. Considering this issue, what is the government's view on building more ICDs in Dhaka?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Our ultimate goal is to upgrade from a developing country to a developed country by 2041. To achieve that goal, import-export will be the main factor. According to the Perspective Plan 2041, it is necessary to achieve 9.9% growth by that time. This growth will be based on a 10% in imports and an 11% in exports. As most of the industries are in and around Dhaka, it is not possible to handle this pressure with only the help of Kamalapur ICD. That is why an initiative has been taken to build a new ICD on 160 acres of land at Dhirasram in Joydebpur near Dhaka. Bangladesh Railway will implement it and through it, the demands of the port will be met. This will increase the transport of goods by rail instead of truck and covered vans along the Dhaka-Chittogram corridor, which will be both cost-effective and safe. At the same time, it is also eco-friendly. A 6 km long rail link will also be constructed with the ICD with a capacity of 354,000 TEU containers to facilitate the transportation of goods.

ICDs are very much needed in Dhaka to increase the capacity of Chittagong port and we are closely monitoring the matter. If the need for more ICDs in Dhaka besides Dhirasram comes up in the survey, the Ministry of Shipping will take initiative in that regard, aside from the railways. However, we can use the experience of Kamalapur in ICD management. Railway and Chittagong port have been jointly operating Kamalapur ICD which was built in an area of the Bangladesh Railways.

**Transportation of goods in Bangladesh is very much dependent on roads. However, there is ample opportunity to reduce road congestion by using inland waterways. What do you have to say about the government's plan regarding this matter and its implementation?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** The navigation problem is a major obstacle in the transportation of goods by inland waterways. Under the direction of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we are placing special emphasis on increasing the navigability of inland waterways. As part of this, during this tenure of the government, we have taken the initiative to revive 10,000 km of waterways and we have already been able to restore about 2,000 km. In addition, through dredging, we want to upgrade some second class waterways to first class, third class waterways to second class, and some fourth class waterways to third class,



so that the transportation of goods by waterways becomes smooth.

Since 2013, we have started transporting containers by inland waterways. Initially, the traders did not show much interest in the matter, but the reduction in tariffs has increased their interest. The construction of multiple ICTs in private enterprises, including the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal, has created a huge potential for increasing container transport by inland waterways.

**Container transport by inland waterways is still Dhaka-centric. Are there any plans to transport containers to other places of the country including Ashuganj by small vessels?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** If containers can be transported by inland waterways in all parts of the country, the pressure on the roads will be reduced a lot. For this, first of all, container terminals can be constructed in all the economic zones of the country. Not just in Ashuganj; there are opportunities to set up inland container terminals in other parts of the country like Rajshahi, Dhalar Char, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Kurigram and this will be done in phases to facilitate container transport.

**When do you want to start the activities of the Bay Terminal after its construction is complete?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** The Bay Terminal is one of our priorities. The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said that Bay Terminal will be established and we want to start its activities in 2024. The Bay Terminal will have three

terminals. One of them will be done by Chittagong port, the other two terminals will be completed through foreign investment. Those with whom the agreement can be reached in the interest of the country will be given the task of constructing the remaining two terminals. A five-kilometre-long 'breakwater' will be constructed to protect the Bay Terminal from hostile weather and large sea waves. It will be about five times the circumference of Chittagong port and will be able to accommodate ships with a draft of 12 metres and a length of 280 metres. The Bay Terminal will manage the country's growing container handling needs.

**How optimistic are you about completing the construction of the Matarbari deep seaport on schedule?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Construction of deep seaport has started at Matarbari. The deep seaport is being constructed under the Chittagong Port Authority. Doubts were raised among many as to whether the work on the Matarbari deep seaport would be completed on time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But there is hope as Nippon Koei has the experience working in that area. This experience will be helpful for them and the work may not be affected by COVID-19. Moreover, the work is being done keeping in mind the issue of COVID-19. All in all, it is expected that the multipurpose terminal will be operational by June 2025.

The Matarbari deep seaport will be the commercial hub of the region. The 18-metre draft port will be able to accommodate ships with a capacity of 10,000 TEUs. This will make it more cost-effective for the traders. All in all, we will have no problem managing

the amount of container and cargo handling that will be required to become a developed country by 2041.

**What are your thoughts on the development of Mongla and Payra ports?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Mongla port has been operating as an international seaport since 1950. Although the port is in a good maritime installation due to its turnaround time, its capacity has not been fully utilised. Because of the vast potential and to relieve the load on Chittagong port, the decision to use Mongla port was made a long time ago. As part of this, the navigability of the outer bar of the Pashur river has been increased by dredging to accommodate ships with a 10-metre draft. At the same time, the management and operation of the port have been speeded up. As a result, the growth of cargo handling in the port is increasing at an enormous rate. Dredging of the inner bar is also started. Once this is done and the Padma bridge is opened, Mongla port will become much more attractive to the users.

The third seaport of the country, Payra, has been constructed at Patuakhali as part of the establishment of a modern and eco-friendly seaport to meet the growing import and export demands of the country. The government also has a comprehensive plan for this port. We want to develop Payra port as a world-class modern port by 2023. To that end, the 75 km long Rabnabad channel will be excavated within a year and a half. Through this, the depth of the inner and outer channel of 100-125 metres width will be ensured. Through these activities, Payra port will become a world-class port. Therefore, the economic activity of the whole southern region surrounding Payra port will accelerate.

**The maritime sector is currently experiencing a huge demand for skilled manpower. This demand will increase in the future. Modern, up-to-date and higher maritime education is required to meet this demand. What is the government's plan in this regard?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** There is no alternative to creating skilled manpower in the maritime sector to exploit the huge job opportunities for the country's sailors on sea-going ships. In order to make maritime education and training modern and up-to-date as well as to spread it further, four new marine academies have been set up in Pabna, Barishal, Rangpur, and Sylhet. On 6 May 2021, the Honourable Prime Minister inaugurated the newly constructed marine academies. In those academies, beside educating 400 cadets a year, mariners will

*'A high-level delegation from the Government of Bangladesh led by the State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP visited the Jebel Ali Free Zone and the Jebel Ali port in Dubai during 21-23 November 2021.'*



be able to take training in different stages. Marine academies have been set up by the government as well as by private initiatives. Besides, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University was established by the government in 2013 with the aim of creating skilled human resources in this sector through higher maritime education.

**Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) once played an important role in transporting various commodities including fuel, fertilisers, and food grains. But this state institution could not hold onto that role later. What are the Government's plans to strengthen the BSC?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established BSC on 5 February 1972 with far-reaching thoughts. Since the post-Bangabandhu governments did not take initiative to procure ships, BSC hasn't made any progress. Bangladesh Shipping Corporation has turned the corner under the leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The number of ships in the fleet is increasing. Six ships have already been added to the BSC fleet, funded by the Chinese government, are operating at sea. Work is underway to procure six more ships.

**The Department of Shipping is one of the important departments under the Ministry of Shipping. The services provided by the department must be digital in the present global setting. What are your plans in this regard?**

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Most of the services of the Department of Shipping have already been digitised. Applications of sailors of seafaring and inland water ships for Certificate of Competency (COC) and Certificate of Proficiency (COP) are now being accepted online. At the same time, the information of processing the certificates is being conveyed to the applicants through mobile text messages. Arrangements have also been made to submit online applications for NOC on various types of applications including examinations of sailors, Safe Manning Certificate, Ship Surveyor Certificate and others. Sailors' sign-on and sign-off activities have also been introduced online. Steps have also been taken to stop CDC fraud. To prevent counterfeiting, special security features have been introduced instead of handwritten CDCs.

**The settlement of maritime boundary has opened the door to endless possibilities for the Blue Economy in Bangladesh. If we want to become a developed country by 2041, there is no alternative but to utilise these resources. What steps has**



*On the occasion of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a seminar titled 'Bangabandhu: Reflection of Eternal Bengal' was held on an inspection ship departed from Narayanganj Dredger Base on the initiative of the Ministry of Shipping on 26 December 2021. State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP was the Special Guest on the occasion.'*

***the government taken to utilise marine resources?***

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Under the able leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the settlement of maritime boundary disputes with Myanmar and India has resulted in Bangladesh gaining territorial waters in the Bay of Bengal which is about 81% of its mainland. In other words, the sovereignty of Bangladesh has been established in 118,813 square kilometres of the Bay of Bengal. Through this, the door has been opened to achieve economic growth by utilising marine resources. These sea resources will act as a supporting force in the economy of Bangladesh and work is already started towards that goal. The Blue Economy Cell, set up under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources is working on this. The Maritime Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also working on the Blue Economy. We hope that with the joint efforts of all concerned, we will be able to make maximum use of the Blue Economy. Sustainable use of these resources will pave the way for us to become a developed country in 2041.

***The whole world has been going through an unusual time since last year. Bangladesh is no exception. The seaports, especially Chittagong port, had to continue their normal activities even during this period. How has it been possible to keep the import-export trade active through the port even in adverse conditions?***

**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** The Chittagong Port Authority made preparations

to deal with the situation before the outbreak of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. A COVID-19 alert was issued at the port in January 2020 to prevent the virus from spreading throughout the country from arrived ships. Special teams were also set up at the port hospital to care for sailors infected with COVID-19. Additionally, Chittagong Port Authority took steps to ensure the use of masks to prevent infection and kept the workplace germ-free. Through this, we have controlled the transmission of the virus in the port.

However, after the announcement of a general holiday, the releasing of containers from Chittagong port decreased. Because of this, the port yards were filled beyond their capacity. To handle the situation, a task force was formed which included stakeholders, the port authority, customs, users, police and private ICDs. The task force was empowered to take any necessary step to handle container congestion. It was also announced that if the containers are released from the port premises, there would be a discount on the fare. This increased the speed of releasing goods from May. Also, the workers have also taken turns to work during the general holidays to keep the port operational. Through these timely measures, it was possible to keep the normal activities of Chittagong port, i.e. import-export trade active in the face of adversity. Despite the pandemic, the Chittagong Port Authority was able to sustain growth in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

***Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with CPA News.***

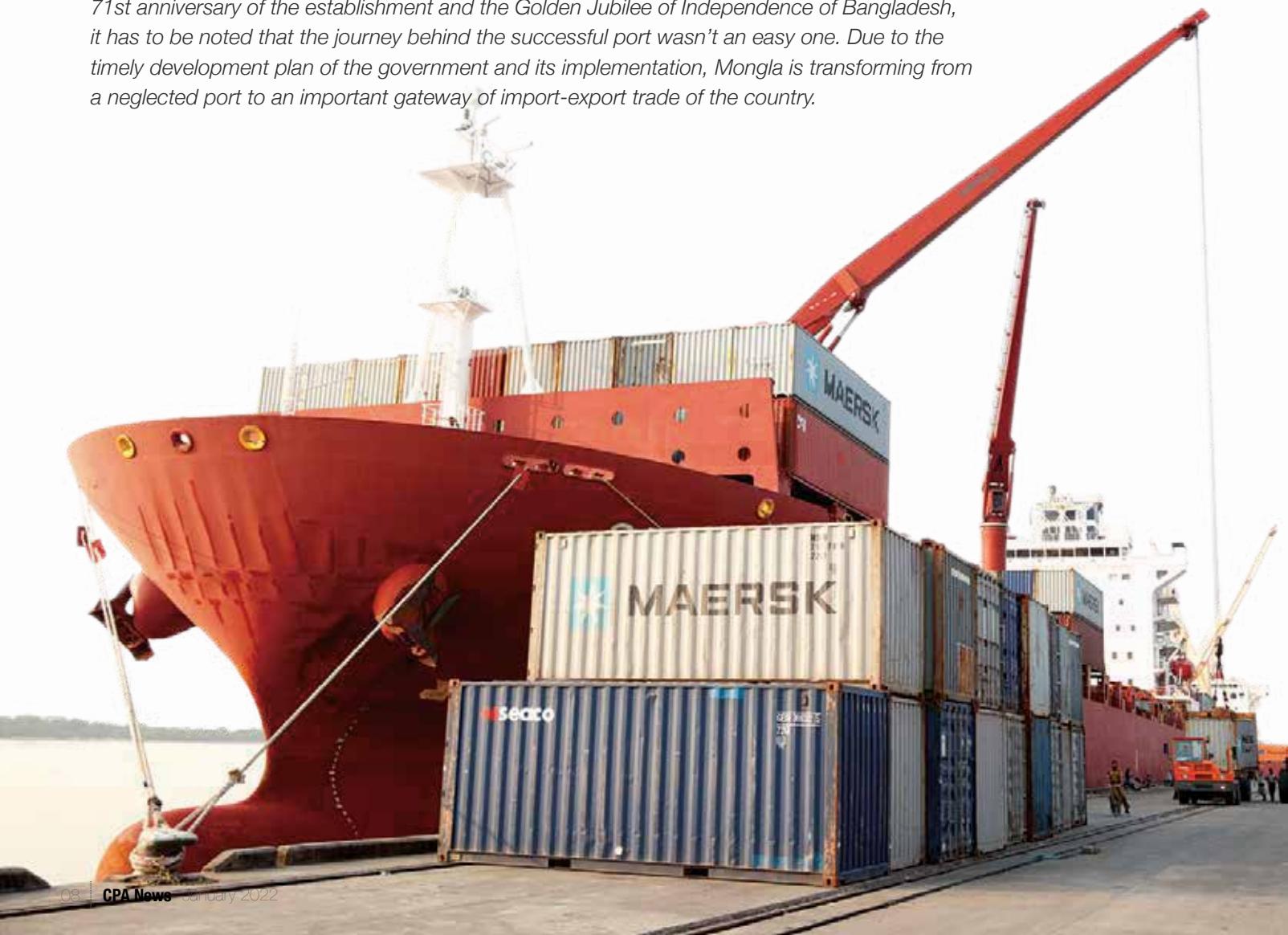
**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP:** Thank you, too.

# Mongla

## a growing port, building the gateway of transshipment

**Md. Zahirul Huq, Omar Faroque Emon**

Losses, strikes and handling of few ships- these words are now a thing of the past. Most of the news about Mongla port that came to the media a decade ago was full of these negative words. Mongla port suffered losses till the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Compared to that, in the 2008-09 fiscal year, it made a profit of about Tk 3 crore. In the last fiscal year, the profit has crossed Tk 130 crore, which is almost 43 times more than a decade ago. A significant turning point for Mongla port, which was primarily dependent on exports of jute and jute products, was when it started exporting garments in 2019. Development projects such as the Padma bridge, the Rampal thermal power plant and the establishment of the economic zone in the south-western part of the country are increasing the importance of Mongla port. Already, Mongla has made a name for itself within India's 'Seven Sisters' and as the transit port of Nepal and Bhutan. On the 71st anniversary of the establishment and the Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh, it has to be noted that the journey behind the successful port wasn't an easy one. Due to the timely development plan of the government and its implementation, Mongla is transforming from a neglected port to an important gateway of import-export trade of the country.



### Its journey started based on jute exports

During the partition, jute and jute products were the main export items of East Pakistan. As Chittagong was the only seaport in East Pakistan, the entire port was used for transporting export goods. Its location is in the south-eastern region of the country, but the majority of jute and jute products were produced in the south-western region. As a result, the then government started looking for alternatives to Chittagong port, to save on transportation costs and time. At the same time, when the Korean War broke out, the demand for jute and jute products in the international market increased exponentially. At that time, it became difficult for Chittagong port to transport the import and export goods alone. As a result, the then government, considering the importance of international trade, adopted a plan to establish the second seaport in East Pakistan. The journey of Mongla port started on 1 December 1950. 10 days after the establishment, on 11 December, a British trade ship anchored in the Sundarbans, at a place called Joymonirgol on the Pashur River. This was the first ship that arrived after the establishment of Mongla port. On 7 March 1951, the port was shifted to a place called Chalna, 14 miles upstream from Joymonirgol. The port was operational there till 1954.

Later, a survey was conducted on the Pashur and Shiba rivers. The survey suggested shifting the port from Chalna to Mongla. The junction of the Mongla river and the Pashur river, 9 to 10 miles downstream from Chalna, was called Mongla. This place also offered greater navigability. Due to having extensive land and being well suited for the construction of a port, on 20 June 1954, the port was shifted to Mongla.

Due to the increasing export trade in jute and jute products, sugar, leather and newsprint, the government adopted a plan to make Mongla port infrastructurally viable. In 1964, it hired a consultancy firm of the United States, Messrs Frederic R. Harris, to conduct a capacity-building survey at the port. After the survey, the firm presented a report stating that it was possible to build a permanent port on the east bank of the Pashur river. In 1965, the government of Pakistan initiated the development of Mongla port based on this report. From 1965 to 1980, in the first phase, necessary land acquisition, water surveying and additional activities were carried out. 2,058 acres of land were acquired.

### Mongla port during the War of Liberation

When the War of Liberation started in 1971, almost all the activities of the port were



**Rear Admiral M Shahjahan,  
NPP, BCGMS, ndc, psc**

**Chairman, Chittagong Port Authority;  
And Preceding Chairman of the Mongla Port Authority**

*"The active participation of seaports in the economic development with excellent strides is particularly praiseworthy"*

Bangladesh, with the vision of becoming a developed country by 2041, progressing dramatically with a phenomenal increase in domestic and international trade. The active participation of seaports in the economic development with excellent strides is particularly praiseworthy in this regard.

As a result of increasing demand for export- import trade throughout Bangladesh and neighbouring countries, Mongla port, located on the South Eastern part of the country, can be potentially busier and economically more appealing.

On 9 April 2020, I was appointed Chairman of the Mongla Port Authority and I served until the last week of January 2021. Thanks to the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's gratitude for believing in me and entrusting me with the vital task of overseeing the Mongla port.

My venture was to transform the port into a world-class seaport by initiating and implementing necessary reforms and development in all areas including navigation, port facilities, port operation and services as well as establishing accountability in port management and also implementing both GOB funded and through Public Private Partnership. Due to outer bar dredging, navigability of the port has substantially increased and that reduces the lightering cost of cargo from outer bar. Now the draft of the outer bar is 9.5 meter.

I'm happy that I was able to contribute my honest efforts to the port's revivification. I am confident that the current Chairman, as well as those who will lead it in the future, will effectively implement this vision of development and uphold Mongla as a worldwide recognised seaport. I wish the continued prosperity of Mongla port.



**Rear Admiral Mohammad Musa,  
OSP, NPP, rcds, afwc, psc, PhD**

**Chairman, Mongla Port Authority**

*"Mongla port is becoming more resourceful, busier and playing a significant role in the sustainable development of Bangladesh."*

Mongla port, like all other maritime ports in Bangladesh, is administered by the Ministry of Shipping, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Chairman of the Mongla Port Authority is the Chief Executive and there are 12 departments that handle day-to-day operations. The Ministry of Shipping as well as high-level parliamentary and advisory committees oversee and monitor all port activities.

On the 71st anniversary of the Mongla port and the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh, it has to be noted that the journey behind a successful Mongla port wasn't an easy one. Due to the timely development plan of the government and its implementation, Mongla port is becoming more resourceful, busier and playing a significant role in the sustainable development of Bangladesh.

By reducing both distance and time, the country's mega-project Padma bridge and railway link will connect Mongla port with other parts of the country, including Dhaka. Agreements with Nepal, Bhutan, and India on transporting transit goods are also a bonus for Mongla port.

In this regard, the Mongla Port Authority is aiming to handle a large number of ships in the coming days besides ensuring the international standard of services to the port users. We are striving tirelessly to establish a conducive environment for flourishing port-based industries by renovating the port in order to open new commercial windows for the sustainable economic development of Bangladesh.

I am grateful to The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's appreciation for trusting in me and assigning me the important duty of leading the Mongla port and I am hopeful to uplift the glory of this port in the near future.



Mongla is the port of entry for over half of all vehicles imported by sea.

stopped. After 25 March, the Pakistani army attempted to capture Mongla port but was met with strong resistance from the armed Bengali youths. On the 28 and 29 of March, the Pakistani navy started firing shells from the warships. As a result, the weak defence of the Bengalis was crushed and the port became deserted. Shells caused extensive damage to the port. Later, the Pakistani army occupied the port and tried to make it operational. At first, the port was devoid of ships but later due to the massive campaign of West Pakistan, one or two ships kept arriving. A large number of Pakistani soldiers built strong bases in the port area. In mid-August, the heroic Bengali freedom fighters launched a guerrilla attack on Mongla and took control of the port. This was a significant incident of that time.

Earlier, in the first week of June, some Bengali submariners of the Pakistani navy fled from France and joined the War of Liberation. The naval commando unit of heroic freedom fighters was formed. Their training arrangements were made at a secret place on the banks of the Bhagirathi river in the Murshidabad district in India. The code name for this camp was C-2P. Its purpose was to form a naval suicide squad. Their training continued under the watchful eye of the Indian navy. Their operation started after the training was complete when a team of 40 naval personnel went to Mongla. Submariner Ahsanullah was the leader of the team. On 14 August, they launched a commando operation on a ship berthed at the port. As a result, 6 foreign ships were wrecked and sank. The purpose of the operation was to weaken the morale of the Pakistani forces and to make the whole world aware of the volatile situation in Bangladesh. Therefore, the Mongla port became non-functional

again. The port remained stagnant until the country gained independence.

#### Bangabandhu led the resurrection

The port was in a state of destruction after the country became independent. The shipwrecks created obstructions in the port channel. All the necessary tugboats, pilot boats, cranes, and other equipment were almost unusable. During such a situation, efforts were being made to normalise the port as quickly as possible. What was most important for rebuilding the newly independent country was to make the port operational again. At that time, a primary survey was conducted. The sunken ships underneath the port-channel became a hindrance. During the transitional period, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emerged as the draftsman for the transformation of the port. After his official visit to Moscow, he called on the then Soviet government to cooperate in clearing the port channel. At the request of Bangabandhu, an agreement was signed on 22 March 1972 between Bangladesh and the Soviet Union to remove the wrecked and sunken ships. The port was then made operational by removing the sunken ships and importing the necessary repair equipment. In 1973, a plan was adopted to construct 7 jetties and work began in January 1974. However, in 1977, another amendment was made to build 5 jetties instead of 7.

The construction of the RCC jetty was inaugurated on 18 July 1977. Nine complementary projects were also launched for the implementation of the main project. Sea-going ships started berthing at the 5 newly constructed jetties from 3 February 1983.

#### A bump in the road

Until the mid-eighties, Mongla was a lucrative port to the southwestern traders. From then on, the condition of the port gradually started deteriorating. Due to the decline of demand for jute and jute products in the world market, the closure of jute mills in the country and the diversification in export products, exports through the port also declined at a significant rate. In the next few years, especially in the '90s, the usability of the Mongla port decreased due to negligence and the reduced navigability of the Pashur river channel. At one point, ship arrival at the Mongla port declined to near zero.

#### Beginning of transformation: From curse to bless

Due to its geographical location, Bangladesh, which is situated on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, is very important to other countries in Asia. The acquisition of vast territorial waters after resolving maritime disputes with India and Myanmar has resulted in increasing Bay of Bengal-centric activities. This is because the seaport-based economy of Bangladesh is getting stronger by utilising the geostrategic advantage of the Bay of Bengal. In addition, the present government took special initiatives at the beginning of 2009 to reduce the singular dependence on Chittagong port and to cope with the growing economic development of the south and south-west. To this end, various steps have been taken to make the Mongla port efficient and operational. To increase the activity of the port, it started importing vehicles in June 2009. In addition, Mongla port has been gradually gaining momentum in port management through the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, Port Advisory Committee, the port users and the Ministry of Shipping.

The once cursed port is now a blessing to the country. The entire Khulna region, including Mongla port, is expected to achieve huge economic prosperity within the next decade, contributing more than 2 % to the growth of GDP. Mongla port will be a milestone in fulfilling Bangladesh's dream of achieving 'double-digit' growth.

#### Padma bridge will increase Mongla port's importance

According to the ADB survey, about 24,000 vehicles will pass over the Padma bridge every day. This number will increase every year. In 2050, about 67,000 vehicles will pass over the Padma bridge every day. A significant number of vehicles will be transporting goods to and from Mongla. According to the ADB study, the Padma bridge will save an average of two hours for buses and 10 hours for trucks to reach the southern districts. It takes 8 to 10 hours to transport imported goods from Chittagong port to the capital, whereas if

the Padma bridge becomes operational, it will take 5 to 6 hours to transport imported goods from Mongla to Dhaka or vice-versa. Construction of Khan Jahan Ali Airport, Khulna-Mongla railway line will open new horizons of connectivity with Mongla.

### Mongla port is also important internationally

The importance of Mongla as an international port is increasing day by day. Ships come to this port from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Australia, Africa, North America and Latin America. Mongla is connected to practically all river ports in Bangladesh, and the coastal shipping agreement has made Mongla more important as an international port by connecting it to the ports of Kolkata and Thailand.

Recently, new possibilities regarding Mongla port have arisen as a result of transit agreements with India and Nepal. Besides, the importance of the Mongla port to Bhutan and China has also increased. As a result of the government's goodwill to facilitate the use of the port, Mongla port will become one of the significant trade hubs in Southeast Asia.

### More advantages at Mongla

Most of the imported goods of Bangladesh come to the country by sea. Besides Chittagong and Mongla, the Payra seaport has also started operations. Chittagong port is at the centre of the country's import-export trade.

Port users say that Mongla port has more advantages than Chittagong port, especially in regards to car import. Due to the comparatively low cost and the convenience of keeping cars safe, traders are more interested to import cars through Mongla port than Chittagong port. While the Chittagong port is working at full capacity, the capacity of the Mongla port is almost half unused. Besides, traders are inclined to use Mongla port as it takes less time in transportation.

### The types of goods that are handled in Mongla port

Mongla port handles three types of goods. Cargos, container goods and cars. About 95% of the port's total handling is cargo. The remaining share is for container goods and cars. According to the latest master plan of the Strategic Planning and Management Consultants (SPMC), the share of the country's total imports by sea is 14% and exports only 2%.

On 17 September 2019, for the first time, Mongla port also entered this sector by exporting garments in a 40 feet long containers. Recently, a Polish readymade garments importer has expressed interest in

importing garments through Mongla port.

### Where Mongla lies ahead

Half of the cars imported through the country's seaports is now done through Mongla port.

The number of car import depends on the car's price, the economic situation and the duty payable on the car according to the budget. In the 2014-15 fiscal year, 11,218 cars were released through Mongla port. In the last fiscal year, this number was 14,474. Although the number of cars did not increase at a significant rate in seven fiscal years, Mongla port's participation in the car import in only 12 years is commendable considering the cost of maintenance and release. The Ministry of Shipping has provided policy support to increase the number.

### Record number of ship arrival at Mongla port

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a collapse in port management around the world. Import-export trade has declined. Despite this, the number of ship arrival at Mongla port has not decreased. Mongla port has handled 970 ships in the last (2020-21) fiscal year. In the previous (2019-20) fiscal year this number was 903, although in the 2018-19 fiscal year it was 912. However, according to the statistics of seven years, this number has increased progressively. The number of ship arrival at Mongla port has also increased under the coastal shipping protocol. This number increased to 333 in the last fiscal year compared to 86 ships in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

### International standard security

The Mongla Port Authority has been implementing the internationally recognised ISPS code since 2004. From the very beginning, its security department has been working for the security of the port's trade, installations, officials and employees. Besides, Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Coast Guard, and Bangladesh Police are working together with the Mongla Port Authority to prevent any criminal activities within the 130 km channel of the port around the Sundarbans. An officer of the rank of Lieutenant Commander is leading the security department. There is also a fire service unit working under the security department, which is working round the clock to give the port safety from fire hazards.

### Services that are available for stakeholders

Equipment: Cargo and container handling services are being provided through 72 pieces of equipment at present under the mechanical and electrical department of the port. Besides, 75 more pieces of equipment

are being procured under the capacity-building project. 66 pieces of equipment for the project have already reached the port.

**Ships:** There are some tugboats to help the cargo and container ships to berth at the port jetty.

**One-stop service:** For the convenience of the users, the one-stop service is available at the port. This has brought together all the departments directly involved in the operational work in one room.

### Short, medium, and long term plans

According to the latest information, the Mongla Port Authority is implementing 9 projects in the short term. Notable among these are procurement of equipment and vessels, preparation of a master plan, enhancement of channel navigability and establishment of VTMIS (Vessel Traffic Management Information System).

Expansion and modernisation of port facilities and Pashur channel conservation dredging are awaiting approval under the medium-term plan.

Besides, the authority has plans to implement 19 development projects in the long run with government funding. These projects have been undertaken for the infrastructural development of the port, purchase of machinery and vessels and installation of modern technology. These projects include Singapore's investment proposals for the construction of the container, coal, LNG handling jetty at Joymonirgol and a floating jetty at Harbaria.

### Beckoning immeasurable possibilities

Compared to Chittagong port, Mongla port does not have much share in import and export trade. The Mongla port, that suffered loss due to negligence, dissatisfaction and lack of foresight, is now in the process of transformation. The establishment, which also made a loss in 2007, has made profits consecutively since the 2008-09 fiscal year. The country's mega-project Padma bridge and railway link will connect Mongla with different parts of the country including Dhaka. This will reduce the distance and save time. On the other hand, the Mongla port is already connected by an extensive shipping route. Agreements with Nepal, Bhutan, and India on transporting transit goods are also a bonus for Mongla. In the not-too-distant future, the port will emerge as a major South Asian port, serving Bangladesh's maritime trading demands.

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**Md. Zahirul Huq**

*Chief of Planning, Mongla port Authority*

**Omar Farooque Emon**

*Reporter, Bandarbarta & CPA News*



# Hydrography to harness the potential of the Blue Economy

Shariful Alam Shimul, Mohammed Abdullah Al Faruk

*'Hydro' is a Greek word that means water, while 'graph' is also a Greek word that means image. To put it another way, hydrography is the study of water depth, impediments beneath the water as well as the actual form and features of water movement utilising charts. This applied science's purpose is to accurately describe the physical characteristics of coastline areas and the bottom of rivers, seas as well as other water bodies. Hydrographic data is collected using a variety of technologies. Water levels and tides, water currents, temperature, salinity and other variables are among the information collected. These data are used to build nautical charts and hydrographic models. Its utility isn't restricted to the creation of nautical charts and publications, though. Rather, hydrography has a distinctive relationship with all aspects of marine science and oceanography, including the exploration and exploitation of marine resources, environmental conservation and management, maritime planning, tsunami and tidal modelling, coastal zone management, marine tourism and maritime defence. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge its true significance.*

## Hydrography as a global practice

Hydrography is not just a matter of practice in a particular region or a particular country. Rather, in this age of globalisation, it has become global practice. There is an international obligation to provide hydrographic services. All member countries of the SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) Convention are required to provide hydrographic services for the safe navigation of ships.

The International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) celebrates World Hydrography Day on 21 June every year. The theme of World Hydrography Day-2021 was 'One Hundred Years of International Cooperation in Hydrography'. The importance of hydrography in safe navigation has long been recognised around the world, as reflected by the theme and worldwide actions have been initiated in response. Besides, hydrographic companies, industry stakeholders and specialists have collaborated and worked tirelessly to obtain a greater understanding of the sea.

## Technology's impact on hydrography

The use of hydrography in identifying the borders of any port is essential. Although hydrography was initially practised manually,

technology has made it easier in the present period. The assessments are now being carried out through topographical surveys using the Differential Global Positioning System or DGPS. There are four types of equipment used in this work. These are - positioning instruments, depth measuring instrument, motion sensor equipment and tide gauge equipment.

In addition, some more supporting instruments are used for hydrographic surveys. E.g. Side-scan sonar, sub-bottom profiler, sediment profile imagery, Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP), automatic survey boat, bathymetric survey drones, LIDAR, sound velocity profiler and use of software for hydrographic work.

## The practice of hydrography in Bangladesh

The government has entrusted the important responsibility of maritime surveys to Bangladesh Navy, while Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is in charge of surveying the country's inland waters. And the seaport authorities of the country are responsible for surveying the areas under their jurisdiction.

Bangladesh Navy has already completed the maritime survey of Bangladesh and is

undertaking updated survey activities every year to ensure safe navigation. In addition, the port authorities of Chittagong, Mongla, and Payra each have a survey department with contemporary survey equipment and trained personnel. The National Hydrographic Committee (NHC) was established by the government in 2001 to manage all hydrographic and maritime activities in Bangladesh. The committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) of Bangladesh Navy and includes representatives from several ministries and agencies. The NHC has been actively working to enhance cooperation between different organisations to make the best possible use of the country's maritime resources.

## Hydrography and Bangladesh Navy

Ocean surveying is a modern technology-based activity, which is constantly changing. As a result, international cooperation and coordination are important for the successful use of new hydrography technologies at sea. Bangladesh Navy maintains close bilateral relations with all international hydrographic organisations. In 1996, Bangladesh Navy began modernising its hydrography services in collaboration with the French government. The collaborative activities began with the goal of providing modern equipment to Bangladesh and developing technical

abilities in the field of hydrography. The second phase was completed in 2001. Bangladesh Navy's hydrographic service launched digital surveys with technical assistance from the French government. Bangladesh Navy Hydrographic School at BNS ISSA KHAN in Chattogram has been recognised by the International Board on Standards of Competence (IBSC) for conducting Category 'B' courses since 2005. It is Bangladesh's sole institute that offers formal hydrography training that meets international standard. Hydrographers from the country's numerous government agencies, as well as trainees from IHO member states, undergo training here.

Bangladesh Navy has already achieved the capability and success of creating paper and Electronic Nautical Charts (ENC) as per IHO standard. So far, Bangladesh Navy has released 53 nautical charts and 11 electronic navigational charts, including nine international series charts of the seas under its jurisdiction, all of which have received national and worldwide appreciation. These maps are frequently used for safe navigation at sea.

In 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Bangladesh Navy and the United Kingdom Hydrography Office (UKHO). The UKHO is disseminating an international series of paper charts of Bangladesh's maritime domain, which are based on Navy surveyed data and are used for safe navigation of all ships at home and abroad.

### Hydrography keeps Chittagong port operational

Chittagong port serves as the country's main entry and exit point for import and export. The Karnaphuli river is the lifeline of this port. The Hydrography Department of the Chittagong Port Authority makes a significant contribution to the year-round navigation of the Karnaphuli river. This department is always doing activities to keep the river safe for navigation, obtaining any kind of advanced idea for the river's development and maintaining the river's environment for all those who utilise it.

The Hydrography Department monitors the Karnaphuli river's behaviour

*The objective of hydrography is to make charts to determine the physical features of a river or sea as well as other underwater obstructions. Bangladesh is also an admirable participant in this global practice.*





and determines what is needed to maintain the channel properly. Since its inception, hydrographic survey and research data on the character of the sea and river have played a critical role in maintaining the port operational and active. In order to keep the navigation of ships at Chittagong port smooth and easy, first of all, it is needed to keep the navigability of the river normal. And, to keep the river navigable throughout the year, the Hydrography Department must continue its regular activities and take the appropriate steps.

The Hydrography Department at Chittagong port is responsible for ensuring that survey activities are carried out throughout the year. These activities cover a 30 km radius from 2.5 km upstream of the Kalurghat bridge to Patenga lighthouse, as well as a sea area of 13 km radius from Patenga lighthouse. In addition, an area of 80 km to the south and 50 km to the north of Patenga lighthouse will be surveyed, according to the government gazette of 2019. Necessary data of the river is collected from the permanent auto-tide gauge stations located at the six points of the Karnaphuli channel. The sandbanks are leased on a yearly basis in order to extract sand and preserve the navigability of the river. To keep the port navigable, the Hydrography Department conducts maintenance dredging and it is also a responsibility of the Hydrography Department to guarantee that the slipway area is navigable at all times.

The Hydrography Department publishes the data obtained through bathymetric surveys through bathymetric charts and identifies submerged wrecks and other objects at the bottom of the river. The Hydrography Department of Chittagong port uses modern technology and software in its survey and dredging work. These include DGPS for positioning, multibeam and single-beam echo sounders for measuring river depth, sound velocity metres, current metres for determining the velocity and direction of river currents, scan sonar to locate submerged debris and objects, sub-bottom profiler for determining the size of submerged objects at the bottom of the river and digital level for levelling survey. In addition, HYPACK is used for hydrographic surveys, data processing and chart publishing; DREDGEPACK is used to calculate the amount of dredging; CARIS-GIS is used for topographic survey data processing and chart publishing and GeoTide software is used for tidal data analysis and prediction.

The total activities of the Chittagong port's Hydrography Department are carried out through five branches. These are the River Survey section, Gauge Reading section, Establishment section, Survey Ship section



*Bangladesh Navy's Hydrographic and Oceanographic Centre provides international standard training to members of various hydrographic organisations both at home and abroad. This centre also serves as a learning resource for the trainee cadets.*

and Dredger section. A chief hydrographer is the head of the Hydrography Department. Besides, the department has a total staff of 26 people including senior hydrographer, hydrographer, senior dredging master, electrical engineer, chief engineer and others. The Hydrography Department now operates seven survey vessels. Two security vessels and a dredger are also being operated by the department.

### Dredging challenges in Karnaphuli river

To keep import-export trade in Chittagong port normal, the Karnaphuli river's navigability must be maintained. Dredging is essential for both capital and maintenance purposes. So far, the Hydrography Department of Chittagong port successfully removed 2,100,000 cubic metres of sediment in 1980 from the downstream area, with 1,800,000 cubic metres removed in 1988. In addition, another phase of capital dredging was initiated in 2011. However, due to various complications, that work has not been completed yet.

The Chittagong Port Authority signed a contract with the Malaysian Maritime and Dredging Corporation in 2011 for capital dredging in the Karnaphuli river. However, due to polythene waste-related issues at the river's bottom, the company was unable to complete the project. From China, the Malaysian organisation brought large dredgers. However, the dredger's cutting blade became trapped in polythene on several occasions, causing the activities to be disrupted.

The Chittagong Port Authority cancelled the contract with the Malaysian company in 2013 due to work being stopped. Later, the authority altered the project's name and decided on dredging once again. The Karnaphuli Capital Dredging Project has been renamed as 'Sadarghat to Bakliarchar Dredging Project'.

According to Hydrography Department sources, an agreement was reached between Chittagong Port Authority and Bangladesh Navy in May 2018 to implement the dredging project. E-Engineering Limited, a subsidiary of Saif Powertech Limited, a local company, is working on the project under the supervision of Bangladesh Navy. The project, that started on 17 October 2018, is expected to be completed by May 2022.

A pile of polythene waste has grown up to 25 feet in certain areas in the Chattogram metropolitan area of the Karnaphuli river. To remove this waste, dredging is currently being conducted with domestic technology. Two types of dredgers are now at work. Three grab dredgers and ten to twelve standard dredgers are among them. A grab dredger is used to remove the polythene and waste first. After that, a regular dredger is used to excavate.

This project aims to remove 5,100,000 cubic metres of sediment and garbage to safeguard the navigability of the Karnaphuli river and ensures continued shipping at Chittagong port. Already, 3,250,000 cubic metres of sediment and waste have been removed.

According to Chittagong port sources, the initial project cost for capital dredging was estimated at BDT 3020 million. Later it was reduced to BDT 2950 million. This dredging is taking place along of the Chittagong port's four-kilometre boundary. When this dredging will be completed, not only will shipping be risk-free, but a big area will be filled with soil and sand from the river, where a lighterage jetty will be built in the future. In this regard, BUET experts are working on a feasibility study.

Besides capital dredging, maintenance dredging work is also carried out regularly at Karnaphuli river by the Hydrography Department of the Chittagong Port Authority. Every year, suction dredging removes 110,000 cubic metres of sediment from the front of the jetty and 1,500,000 cubic metres of sediment from the outer bar and Karnaphuli channel. The Hydrography Department is also in charge of dredging in front of important canals such as the Chakta and Rajakhali of the Karnaphuli river in order to relieve waterlogging in Chattogram city.

### BIWTA for safe inland waterways

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is in charge of ensuring that the country's inland waterways are navigable. The authority, which is overseen by the Ministry of Shipping, has a Hydrography Department. This department has a total of 254 employees, with a director serving as the department's head.

The Hydrography Department at BIWTA performs a variety of duties and operations, including:

- To prepare all types of hydrographic

- surveys and charts of inland and coastal waterways
- To conduct hydrographic surveys for installation of buoys, lights and beacons for safe navigation of waterways
- To conduct bundling surveys, coastal surveys as well as pre and post-dredging hydrographic surveys to maintain the required navigability
- To collect and store round-the-clock gauge data through radar sensors at 54 gauge stations in inland and coastal areas of the country
- To use collected gauge data in compiling hydrographic survey charts
- To collect and analyse gauge data, publish annual tide table and supply/sell as per demand
- To determine the distance between different places of the waterways, publish it in the form of a booklet and supply it as per the demand of public-private organisations
- To supply/sell the collected gauge data to various research and educational institutes as per demand
- To provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in compiling gauge data and preparing co-tidal charts for identification of continental shelf, baseline in establishing maritime boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)
- To create clear charts, publish them, keep them safe and supply/sell print copies on demand
- To transmit uninterrupted signal using artificial satellite- based positioning DGPS system

- To install, repair and maintain all relevant accessories of DGPS (transmitters, receivers, diesel generators, etc.) at office and field level
- To install, repair, and maintain all equipment (echo sounders, water level recorders, total stations, etc.) used in hydrographic surveys at office and field level
- To install, repair, and maintain all HF SSB and VHF sets used by the authority
- To provide technical assistance in collecting, installing, repairing, and maintaining various types of electronic equipment used by the authority
- To collect, install, repair and maintain all air conditioning devices and refrigerators used by the authority
- Acceptance and implementation of development projects
- To provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Shipping for the establishment of deep seaports

### End thoughts

Bangladesh's economic progress is dependent on the Bay of Bengal. The Bay of Bengal transports 94% of the country's overall import and export. As a result, hydrographic survey data is essential for locating offshore mineral reserves, growing agricultural, fisheries, environmental and maritime sectors as well as performing research activities targeted at producing eco-friendly and sustainable new ways to boost output. Hydrography is paramount to achieving the Blue Economy's full potential. Hydrographic data contributes significantly to the conservation of the marine environment and the defence of the country, in addition to ensuring safe navigation.

As a coastal country, Bangladesh's hydrographic surveying organisations work ceaselessly to maintain the country's waters navigable. Activities connected to the exploration and utilisation of marine resources will be intensified further in the future, with the demarcation of maritime boundaries with Myanmar and India. As a result, the need for hydrographic surveys will increase in the following days. To make the best use of limited resources and ensure safe navigation in Bangladesh's waters, we must strengthen cooperation and coordination between the country's hydrographic organisations as well as all river and sea users.

**Shariful Alam Shimul**  
Contributor, Bandarbarita

**Mohammed Abdullah Al Faruk**  
Deputy Assistant Engineer (Hydrography)  
Chittagong Port Authority

*This type of dredger is used by the Chittagong Port Authority to maintain the navigability of the Karnaphuli river.*





## BCIM: An economic corridor with great potential

CPA News desk

Bangladesh is improving in both economic and social spheres. The once-war-torn and economically vulnerable country is now a global development role model. The country's biggest challenge right now is to maintain its current status while pursuing new objectives. Hence, one of the most significant strategies is to capitalise on the opportunities presented by the country's geographic location. Because we live in the age of connectivity, advancements in the communications industry will lower the cost of doing business.

India, Bangladesh's neighbour, now boasts a large economy. Furthermore, China, the world's second-largest superpower, is a close neighbour. The majority of our imports come from these two countries. Bangladesh imports about USD 10 billion in commodities from China each year, and USD 6 billion from India. Bangladesh can readily export a wide range of goods to both of these nations. Exports to these countries, however, remain lower than imports. Of course, there are certain stumbling blocks. Therefore, we need to develop regional connectivity to solve this problem. The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor, a regional economic corridor initiated by China, will provide this opportunity.

### BRI: The resurrection of the old silk road

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as One Belt One Road (OBOR), is a modernised version of the ancient silk road. It's an effort to build something new on the foundation of something old. Beijing intends to make full use of all trade connectivity options available to it in order to retain its economic strength. For strategic reasons, China's BRI project is instrumental to the development of Bangladesh.

This trade route was established by China during the Han dynasty in 200 BC, under the name of silk road or silk route. Not only Chinese traders but also traders from Turkey, Arabia, India, Iran, Syria, Armenia, used the silk road to trade with Central Asia, South Asia, Arabia, Europe and Africa. This road is known as the silk road because it was used to transport high-quality Chinese silk to countries all over the world.

### BRI and BCIM

The British government decided to open the 2,000-year-old silk road in 1930. However, due to the outbreak of World War II, this could not be implemented. In 1999, China proclaimed the rebirth of the silk road in the commercial city of Kunming, nearly seven

decades later. For the past 14 years, China has been working on the proposal.

BCIM is a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The ancient silk road once improved the people's living standards in the region. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China hopes to revive the same prosperity. The only difference is that, in light of the current geo-economic situation, China intends to expand this corridor. As part of this effort, it is working on an economic land belt that will connect Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East and Europe with countries that were once common in ancient silk road. China also intends to construct a maritime transportation network that will link its ports to the African coast.

Formal discussions about BCIM also started in 2013. On the 18th and 19th of December of that year, the four-nation delegation met for the first time in Beijing. The next year, on 17 and 18 December, Bangladesh, India, China and Myanmar participated in a two-day conference held in Cox's Bazar. During that conference, the four countries signed joint minutes on BCIM Economic Corridor.

### Investments will be dynamic

The four countries have been working on the BCIM Economic Corridor for several years. The BCIM countries have a population of 2.80 billion people and a combined GDP of USD 19 trillion. The BCIM Economic Corridor issue is being coordinated by China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC). With the launch of the BCIM Economic Corridor, countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia will be able to get connected with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Dhaka in 2016, a new chapter in China-Bangladesh relations began, with the signing of a memorandum of understanding and a development agreement worth approximately USD 24 billion. These development projects are included in the BRI initiative.

A study is being carried out to see what projects may be carried out as part of the BCIM Economic Corridor. A significant amount of infrastructure investment is required to construct a regional connectivity network. The AIIB was established with the primary goal of providing funds for infrastructure development. The initiative taken by China in establishing this bank is highly remarkable. Bangladesh is one of the

more than fifty countries that have already joined.

Currently, trade between Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar is not as it is expected to be. Analysts say the BCIM Economic Corridor will be able to bring the necessary momentum to the trade of this region. According to a study by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries in India, this corridor can open the door to businesses worth USD 13.20 billion.

### There are challenges to overcome

There are some obstacles to the implementation of BCIM Economic Corridor. First of all, there is a problem with accessing the market. In addition, non-tariff barriers, inadequate infrastructure and the absence of favourable banking and financial mechanisms among the associated countries could become problems. In order to ensure benefits from BCIM Economic Corridor, it is necessary to establish a well-balanced diplomatic relationship within the countries that are involved. This will not be an easy task.

Both the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the BCIM Economic Corridor are associated with BRI. The geopolitical relationship between the countries associated with these two initiatives isn't very warm. As a result, it will be a little difficult to move forward with the two projects.

Due to India's opposition, until May 2019, BCIM was not listed as a part of 35 corridors and projects affiliated with BRI. However, in the same year, by sending a representative

to the 13th BCIM Forum, India revived this initiative.

### Bangladesh will be benefitted

Bangladesh will be able to take advantage of the large market in this region via the silk road due to its strategic position and manpower. Just as Bangladesh is competing in the global market in the field of the textile industry, it will also have the opportunity to further develop the leather, information technology and shipbuilding industry through the use of silk road. Strengthening the transport network between Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar will open up new possibilities for trade, investment, electricity and tourism. If the route goes through the southern part of Bangladesh, it will increase the business opportunities of the Chattogram area.

At present, it is costly to import goods from China to Bangladesh. Furthermore, due to high export costs, Bangladeshi products are unable to take advantage of the Chinese market. This corridor will partially address India's demand for a transit route through Bangladesh to transfer products to several states in the northeast of the country.

According to a study on BCIM conducted by Asia Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade, if trade between the four countries is partially liberalised, it will be possible for Bangladesh to get access to duty-free trade worth at least Tk 3,120 crore and the maximum benefit will be Tk 5000 crore. In addition, trade between these four countries will increase by Tk 44,500 crore.

Research is being carried out in Bangladesh regarding the BCIM Economic Corridor.

According to some research, the resurgence of the historic silk road will significantly reduce the lead time, which is a major factor in competitiveness in this rapidly changing world.

### Expectations to solve the Rohingya problem

China believes that the implementation of the BCIM Economic Corridor will provide a solution to the ongoing Rohingya crisis. Mr Zhang Zou, the then ambassador of China to Bangladesh, mentioned this at a conference which was held in Dhaka in May 2019. Beijing hopes that the implementation of the BCIM Economic Corridor will find a suitable solution to the problem. Mr Zhang Zou also mentioned that Bangladesh is becoming a respectable and important partner of the BRI initiative.

### Conclusion

Due to its geographical location, Bangladesh has the opportunity to become a regional economic hub. With this objective in mind, Bangladesh has joined the BRI and BCIM Economic Corridor. Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government has always emphasised regional goodwill and economic integration. The Prime Minister thinks that the whole world has become a global village and for this reason, there is no alternative to increasing connectivity for the development of the country's economy. The BRI or BCIM Economic Corridor will improve this connectivity, which will benefit all the associated countries.

Any regional project will face a number of challenges in its implementation. Obstacles arise as a result of strategic, economic, political, and ethical disagreements. These obstacles can be overcome through diplomatic discussions and activities. This is true in the case of the BCIM Economic Corridor, too. Bangladesh believes that if there is a new challenge in the way of implementing the BCIM Economic Corridor, it will be possible to deal with it through mutual understanding.

If the BCIM Economic Corridor is implemented, the pace of development in Bangladesh will be further accelerated. The construction of this connectivity network will necessitate significant infrastructure investment, which will result in numerous job opportunities. In other words, BCIM Economic Corridor will make a significant contribution to the GDP of the country. For this reason, we expect that the BCIM Economic Corridor will be successfully implemented by overcoming all challenges.

Representatives of Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar signed a 12-point joint statement at the 2nd China-South Asia Cooperation Forum held in China in June 2019.





## ► The Honourable Prime Minister inaugurated the Payra bridge



The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has inaugurated a bridge built over the Payra river at Patuakhali. She inaugurated the bridge virtually from Ganabhaban on 24 October.

At the same time, the Honourable Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of a 6-lane highway with separate SMVT lanes on both Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Tamabil roads.

With the launch of the Payra bridge, there will be no need to bear the suffering of ferries to go to Kuakata from Barishal. Earlier, it used to take 6 to 8 hours to go from Barishal to Kuakata. Now it will take only 3 to 4 hours because of the Payra bridge. It is hoped that the introduction of ferry-free road connectivity will increase the tourist attraction in Kuakata.

The construction project of Payra bridge at Lebukhali point on Patuakhali-Barishal highway was approved by ECNEC in 2012. The Honourable Prime Minister laid the foundation stone on 19 March 2013. Construction began on 24 July 2016, under the supervision of Chinese contractor Longjian Road & Bridge Co., Ltd. Although the work order gave 33 months for the construction of the bridge, the duration of the project was extended in two phases till 30 June 2022. The bridge has been opened to traffic before this extended period.

The construction of this one and a half kilometre long bridge has cost Tk 1,447 crore. Of this, 82% was funded by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the APEC Fund.

The design of the Payra bridge with a length of 1,470 metres and a width of 19.76 metres is somewhat exceptional. Extradosed cable-stayed technology has been used to construct this four-lane installation. The Shah Amanat bridge over the Karnaphuli river in Chattogram was built using the same technology.

The Payra bridge is connected by cables on both sides. There is only one pillar in the middle of the river. As a result, the normal flow of the river will continue. The bridge is 18.30 metres above the river. The lights here are being lit with the help of solar power.

## ► Port's territory is free from piracy: ReCAAP

From January to November 2021, there were no incidents of piracy on the domestic and foreign ships that arrived in Chittagong port. ReCAAP, an international organisation working to prevent armed robbery, piracy and theft on ships, published this information in their January-November report.

According to the ReCAAP report, in the 11 months of 2021, a total of 72 incidents of piracy took place but none of them has taken place in Chittagong port's territory. At the same time, there was no incident of piracy in South China Sea waters. There were 5 incidents of piracy in India, 11 in Indonesia, one in Malaysia, and 11 in the Philippines. Two incidents have occurred in Vietnam.

## ► In the third phase, Chittagong Port Authority has given incentives to 6,752 workers

Workers of berth operators, terminal operators, and ship handling operators engaged in cargo and container handling at Chittagong port have received incentives from the Chittagong Port Authority. On 18 November, the third phase began, and each of the 6,752 workers received a Tk 2,500 as incentive. The Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority Rear Admiral M. Shahjahan handed over the money to the representatives of workers and operators.

At that time, the Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority said, 'the operation of the Chittagong Port Authority was not closed even for a minute as the workers provided uninterrupted services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The workers have worked amidst various obstacles to keep the country's economy afloat. Although the COVID-19 situation has been returning to normal, we are giving incentives again considering the financial hurdles of the workers.'

He further said, 'the Honourable Prime Minister is always thinking of Chittagong port. She has arranged COVID-19 vaccine for all the officers, employees and workers of Chittagong port on a priority basis. We will support her by working diligently from our respective positions to reach the goal of taking Bangladesh to the level of a developed country by 2041.'

Earlier, in July last year, in the first phase, each worker was given Tk 11,000 and in the second phase, in May this year, Tk 1,500 was given beside food assistance. This money was given from the labour fund of the Chittagong Port Authority.

The Chittagong Port Authority Board Member (Administration and Planning) Md. Zafar Alam, Member (Finance) Kamrul Amin, Member (Engineering) Commodore Mohammad Niyamul Hasan, Member (Harbour and Marine) Commodore Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Director (Administration) Md. Mominur Rashid, Director (Traffic) Enamul Karim, Secretary Mohd. Omar Faruk, Chief Personnel Officer Md. Nashir Uddin and senior officials of the operator organisations were present.



► **The Honourable Prime Minister called upon the foreign investors to take advantage of the business environment**



The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the investors of different countries to take advantage of all the facilities provided by the government for investing in Bangladesh. She made the call in her inaugural address at the two-day long 'International Investment Summit-2021' on 28 November.

The Honourable Prime Minister took part in the main event organised by Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Dhaka via video conference from Ganabhaban.

The Honourable Prime Minister said, 'I am happy to know that 2,332 people from 15 countries including the United States, United Kingdom, China, Japan, India, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Malaysia have registered for this international summit. We are committed to providing all policy support, including infrastructure development, to create an investment-friendly environment in Bangladesh.'

Abul Kasem Khan, Co-Chair, Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee (LIDWC), Bangladesh, presented the keynote address. Director-General of PPP Authority Md. Abul Bashar, Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority Rear Admiral M Shahjahan and President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mahbubul Alam also spoke at the summit.

BIDA's Executive Chairman Sirajul Islam said at a news conference that an investment promise of USD 270 crore or about Tk 23,000 crore had been received at the end of the international investment conference. Most of this investment promise comes from Saudi Arabia.

► **CPA has relaxed the cut-off time for export containers for more three months**



At the request of BGMEA, an association of garment manufacturers and exporters, the Chittagong Port Authority has relaxed the cut-off time and gate-in time for export containers up to 30 March 2022. This information was given through a notice signed by the Director (Traffic), Enamul Karim on 27 December. As per the previous notice, this facility for the garments industry has come to

an end on 31 December 2021. The Chittagong Port Authority has granted this facility in response to BGMEA's request to the port's Chairman on 14 December for relaxing the cut-off time and gate-in time. This facility will be effective only in the case of exporting goods of the garment industry.

It has been requested in the notice to complete the work of stuffing and documentation of export containers within the extended cut-off time.

► **CPA has handled a record number of export containers**

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has set a record for the handling of export containers. In October, container handling of exported goods was 72,642 TEUs, which holds the record for the highest amount of handling in a single month so far.

This record has been made possible by the return of momentum in the export trade based on the country's garment sector. The CPA has offered excellent service in shipping exported goods on time. Other products exported include frozen food, agro-processed products, jute and jute products, plastic products, leather and leather products, home textiles, engineering and chemical products.

In the first four months (July-October) of the current fiscal year (2021-22), 281,927 TEUs were handled. The highest was in October, at 72,642 TEUs. Besides, 70,786 TEUs of export containers were handled in July, 67,040 TEUs in August and 71,459 TEUs in September.

In October 2021, Bangladesh exported goods worth Tk 40,592 crore, according to revised statistics from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). It is the highest monthly export volume in the country's history.





## ➤ The Honourable Prime Minister has directed to set up Matarbari Development Authority



Minister made these remarks at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on 23 November.

There are 37 ongoing projects in the Maheshkhali and Matarbari areas of Cox's Bazar. The Chittagong Port Authority is in charge of Matarbari deep seaport. The Ministry of Power is in charge of the 1,200 MW power plant at Matarbari. Economic zones are being constructed, with the Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) in charge. Gas lines, LNG terminals, roads are also being built. Different departments of the government are implementing these projects separately. The Honourable Prime Minister has directed to form the Matarbari Development Authority to coordinate these works. The new authority will function similarly to the Payra Port Authority and the Chittagong Port Authority.

After the ECNEC meeting, the Minister of the Ministry of Planning MA Mannan told reporters that the Honourable Prime Minister had said that everyone must work together. There is no option of working separately. A total of 10 projects worth Tk 29,344 crore have been approved at the ECNEC meeting.

State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam, Secretary of the Planning Division Pradip Ranjan Chakraborty and others were present at the press conference.

## ➤ New service jetty at the port

A new service jetty has been constructed next to jetty no. 1 of Chattogram port. This jetty will be able to accommodate Chattogram port's tug boats, pilot boats, survey ships, water supply ships and other service-providing ships.

This jetty has been constructed with the port's fund. The jetty is 220 metres long and 20 metres wide. The draft is 5.5 metres. In addition to the jetty, a 2,650 sq. ft. three-storied office building, a 3,000 sq. ft. warehouse of steel structure, a 2,100 cubic metre water reservoir, a 222 metre long 8 feet high retaining wall, riverbank and shore protection, drainage system, a 500 KV electrical substation, and a 100 feet high signal tower have also been built under the project.

In addition to the use of service jetties for anchoring and maintenance of the port's ships, the facility of releasing goods in case of emergency is also available at this jetty.

## ➤ Officials and employees of the Chittagong Port Authority took an oath with the Honourable Prime Minister to build a developed country



Officials and employees of all levels of Chittagong Port Authority have taken an oath to build a developed and prosperous country in unison with the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. People from all levels took the oath by joining a video conference hosted during the main event held at the south plaza of the National Parliament on 16 December, Victory Day. As part of this, the officials and employees took an oath together from the port's Shaheed Engineer Shamsuzzaman Stadium. Students of all educational institutions of the port also took an oath at this time.

The Chittagong Port Authority organised a lively programme on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Independence and Victory Day. On that day, Board Members led by the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority Rear Admiral M Shahjahan paid homage to the martyrs by laying flowers at the memorial of the Port Republic Club premises. Later, the Port Officers' Association, Port Employees' Council and educational institutions paid their respects.

The Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority took part as the chief guest in the march past and a choreography display was held at the port stadium, in which the students of the educational institutions participated. He gave prizes to the teams that demonstrated their best skills at the end of the show. At the same time, the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority distributed prizes among the winners of the essay and painting competitions held in the educational institutions of the port.

Later, he attended the reception of the heroic freedom fighters at the Shaheed Mohammad Fazlur Rahman Munshi Auditorium. An oath was taken with the Honourable Prime Minister in the afternoon as part of the national programme, and a cultural event was held in the evening.

## ➤ Bangladesh-India shipping secretary-level meeting held in New Delhi



The meeting between Bangladesh and India at the shipping secretary level, 21st Standing Committee and 2nd Intergovernmental Committee, was held on 20-22 October in New Delhi, India. Earlier, a 21-member

delegation from Bangladesh left Dhaka for New Delhi on 19 October to attend the meeting. The Secretary, Ministry of Shipping Mohammed Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury led the delegation. The bilateral meeting was held to enhance trade between Bangladesh and India through coastal shipping, transit and transhipment. It also discussed issues of mutual interest.

The members of the delegation who participated in the meeting were Additional Secretary (Organisation-1) of the Ministry of Shipping A. K. M. Shamimul Huq Siddique, member of National Board of Revenue Zakia Sultan, Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority Rear Admiral M Shahjahan, Chairman of Mongla Port Authority Rear Admiral Mohammad Musa, Chairman of Bangladesh Land Port Authority Md. Alamgir, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Commodore Golam Sadeq, Director General of the Department of Shipping Commodore A Z M Jalal Uddin, Joint Secretary and Chittagong Port Authority Board Member Md. Zafar Alam, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping ATM Monemul Haque, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce Md. Abdus Samad Al Azad, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ATM Rakibul Haque, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping S M Mostafa Kamal, Deputy Secretary Md. Aminur Rahman, Director of the Prime Minister's Office Jajrin Nahar, Director of BIWTA Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, Chief Engineer of Department of Shipping and Ship Surveyor Md. Manjurul Kabir, Second Secretary of National Board of Revenue Akhtar Hossain, President of Bangladesh Container Ship Owners' Association Nasir Ahmed Chowdhury, General Secretary of Bangladesh Cargo Vehicle Owners' Association Md. Nurul Haque and Chairman of the Coastal Ship Owners' Association of Bangladesh Sheikh Mahfuz Hamid.

The last meeting between the two countries at the shipping secretary-level was held on 4 and 5 December 2019 in Dhaka.

## ➤ Ships of Bangladesh have a greater share in the transportation of goods under the PIWTT

Waterways are becoming more popular than roads for trade between Bangladesh and India. The amount of trade using waterways between the two countries is increasing every year. And ships of Bangladesh have a greater share in transporting these goods. In the fiscal year 2020-21, 92% of the ships used for transporting goods between the two countries are Bangladeshi. The remaining 8% of the goods is transported by Indian ships. Earlier, only raw materials for cement were imported by sea. But now rice, wheat, maize, stone, and other products are also being imported. Due to this, the amount of transportation of goods has increased. This is according to a report given by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) at a recent meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Shipping.

According to the information provided by the BIWTA, the amount of import-export between the two countries in the 2016-17 fiscal year was more than 2,624,000 tons. In contrast to the 3,011 ships of Bangladesh, only 29 Indian ships were used to transport these goods. As such, 99% of the goods transported that year was on Bangladeshi ships.

In the next fiscal year i.e. 2017-18, the amount of import-export was more than 2,700,000 tons. 3,300 Bangladeshi ships were used to transport these goods. On the other hand, 86 Indian ships were used. In that year too, 98% of the ships used for transporting goods were Bangladeshi.

In the 2018-19 fiscal year, 95% or 2,685 ships of Bangladesh have been used for import and export of more than 2,400,000 tons of goods. In contrast, 59 Indian ships were used. In the next fiscal year, the import-export amount was more than 2,780,000 tons. In that year, 96% or 3,192 Bangladeshi ships transported products, whereas 70 Indian ships were utilised.

In the last fiscal year 2020-21, the import-export volume of the two countries by sea was more than 3,959,000 tons. 3,913 ships of Bangladesh were used for transportation of these goods, which is 92%. In contrast, 226 Indian ships have been used.

According to the report submitted to the parliamentary standing committee, the Protocol for Inland Water Trade & Transit (PIWTT) has been in effect between Bangladesh and India since 1972 for trade through waterways. Until 2000, goods could only be transported by Indian ships. After 2000, Bangladeshi ships were also involved in transporting goods.

## ➤ Ships will now directly sail between Italy and Chittagong port

Experimentally, small container ships have started sailing directly from Chattogram to Europe. A ship carrying empty containers from an Italian port berthed at the Chittagong port's jetty on 23 December.

The new service has been launched by freight forwarder RIF Line and its subsidiary Calypso Compania de Navigation.

The garments industry will get the most benefit from this initiative. Because 60% of Bangladesh's export products go to European countries. As a result of this initiative, it will now take at least 7 to 8 days less than before to deliver goods to foreign buyers in Europe.



► **A Memorandum of Understanding signed between Thai Port Authority and Chittagong Port Authority**



A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Port Authority of Thailand (Ranong port) and the Chittagong Port Authority of Bangladesh on 20 December. Chittagong Port Authority Board Member Md. Jafar Alam and Lt. JG. Dr Chamnan Chairith, R.T.N., Deputy Director General (Asset Management and Business Development) from the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) signed the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of their respective authorities.

The Memorandum of Understanding is expected to facilitate more trade between Bangladesh and Thailand by increasing sea connectivity. This is part of Bangladesh's broader vision to enhance greater connectivity with neighbouring countries, including the BIMSTEC region. The Memorandum of Understanding will encourage the business community on both sides to explore more trade and investment opportunities. Apart from this, both the port authorities will benefit through information exchange and cooperation in promoting port management, operations, information technology, communication, port connectivity, coastal shipping, port-related industries and investment promotion.

Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping Mohammad Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority Rear Admiral M Shahjahan, and other senior officials were virtually present at the signing ceremony.

► **Captain Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman is the new board member of Chittagong Port Authority**



Captain Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, (E), psc, BN has joined as the new Member (Engineering) of Chittagong Port Authority. He took over the responsibilities of the previous Member (Engineering) Commodore Mohammad Niyamul Hasan on 22 November.

Captain Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman joined Bangladesh Navy as an officer cadet on 10 January 1993 and was commissioned in the engineering branch on 1 July 1995. After obtaining the competency certificate, he served as an engineer officer in various small, medium ships and frigates of Bangladesh Navy.

Captain Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman obtained a bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering from Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET). He is a graduate of the Defence Services Command and Staff College and holds a master's degree from the Bangladesh University of Professional. He has also participated in various courses at home and abroad.

He served as the training commander at BNS SHAHEED MOAZZAM, the training base of Bangladesh Navy. He also served as General Manager (Production) of Dockyard and Engineering Works Limited and General Manager (Shipbuilding) of Chittagong Dry Dock Limited. Internationally, he had been stationed in Georgia as a military observer in the UN missions and in South Sudan as a member of the UN peacekeeping contingent. Before joining the Chittagong Port Authority, Captain Mahbubur Rahman served as the Director (Engineering) at Bangladesh Coast Guard headquarters.

► **For the third year in a row, Bangladesh leads the world in ship breaking**



Bangladesh has topped the global ship breaking sector for the third year in a row. In 2020, Bangladesh claimed the top spot by breaking 38.5% of ships in the world. The report of the 'Review of Maritime Transport-2021' published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on 18 November revealed this information.

India is ranked second, and Pakistan is ranked third, according to the report. India broke 29.1% of ships and Pakistan broke 16.6%. Turkey ranked fourth by breaking 9.2% ships and China ranked fifth with 1.1%. The contribution of the rest of the countries is only 5.5%.

In 2019, 54.7% of the total ship breaking in the world was in Bangladesh. In 2018, this share was 47.2%. In that year, Bangladesh overtook India and took the top spot. Bangladesh has held the top spot in this industry for the third time in a row.

## ► UN adopts resolution on LDC graduation of Bangladesh



The UN General Assembly has recommended and adopted a resolution for the graduation of Bangladesh from the level of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The decision was taken at the 40th plenary meeting of the 76th session of the council. The Ministry of Finance said this in a press release on 24 November. In the statement, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal described it as a 'historic achievement' and as a great milestone in Bangladesh's development journey.

For the second time, Bangladesh received a recommendation to meet the criteria for graduation from LDC at the tri-annual meeting of the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP). Bangladesh should be given a five-year preparatory period from 2021 to 2026, according to the CDP. Bangladesh is the only country that has qualified for graduation from LDC by meeting the three criteria set by the United Nations. Bangladesh's achievement will improve the country's international image and speed up its growth.

Bangladesh will continue to benefit from the facilities it received as an LDC during the preparation period. Apart from that, under the current status, Bangladesh will be able to enjoy duty and quota-free benefits in the European Union (EU) market for another three years after 2026, i.e. till 2029.

## ► Cranes with a capacity of 100 tons have been added to Chittagong port



Two cranes with a handling capacity of 100-ton have been added to Chittagong port's inventory. This is the first time cranes of this capacity were added. At the same time, two 50-ton cranes have also been added. Four cranes have been added to the main operation after test commissioning. More equipment, including four quay gantry cranes, will be added to the port. Adding the new equipment will further increase the productivity of the port.

The Chittagong Port Authority has undertaken a project to procure a total of 104 pieces of equipment including 4 quay gantry cranes at a cost of Tk 900 crore. 2 cranes of 100-ton handling capacity, 2 cranes of 50-ton handling capacity, 2 cranes of 30-ton handling capacity, 12 cranes of 20-ton handling capacity, 23 mobile cranes of 10-ton handling capacity, 11 Rubber-Tired Gantry cranes (RTG), 21 4-high straddle carriers, 6 2-high straddle carriers, 4 reach stackers, 2 container movers, 45-ton of 4 variable reach trucks, 2 log handler stackers, 4 forklift trucks with 20-ton handling capacity, 1 material multi-handler with 35-ton handling capacity, 2 low bed trailers, and 2 heavy tractors are being purchased under this project.

## ► Karnaphuli capital dredging work is being completed earlier than planned

Although the Karnaphuli capital dredging project was scheduled to be completed by June 2022, it will be completed ahead of schedule. Chittagong Port Authority is implementing this project to restore the navigability of the Karnaphuli river.

Commander M Arifur Rahman, project director and chief hydrographer of Chittagong Port Authority said, 'Even though we have time until June 2022, I am hoping the work will be completed by March. About 3 million cubic metres of sediment and rubbish has been removed from the bottom of Karnaphuli out of the 5.1 million cubic metres which were determined. The overall progress of the work has been 69%.'

The work of the Karnaphuli capital dredging project, which is named 'Sadarghat to Bakliar Char Dredging', started on 27 September 2018. The project duration was set at four years including one year for dredging and maintenance dredging for the remaining three years.

The project hit an obstacle at the beginning due to the polythene stuck at the bottom of Karnaphuli. The dredger fan kept getting stuck in the polythene that had accumulated at the bottom of the river. The contractor then decided to bring a powerful 31-inch diameter cutter suction dredger from China for use in the excavation work. This powerful cutting suction dredger was brought from China in March 2019. After completion of other procedures including installation of pipes, dredging started with the suction dredger from 16 May. But the dredger was sent back after being unable to remove the polythene. Later, following the advice of the advisory team of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), dredging was started using local technology.





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