

20 APR 2026

Bangladesh, EU to sign PCA in Brussels today

Bangladesh and the European Union (EU) are set to sign the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in Brussels, Belgium, today (Monday) as both sides move to take the relationship to new heights further institutionalising bilateral cooperation.

Once signed, the PCA will serve as the legal and political foundation for the strategic and long-term Bangladesh-EU relationship, said officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday, reports UNB.

They said it will help strengthen relations between Bangladesh and the EU in many policy areas, from human rights and governance to trade, investment, environmental sustainability and climate change as well as food security, energy, transport and science, technology and innovation. Moreover, the agreement will also be a significant milestone as Bangladesh moves towards becoming the first South Asian country to sign a PCA with the European Union.

The EU looks forward to the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Bangladesh which will be 'initialed' during the visit of the Foreign Minister to Brussels on April 20, enhancing cooperation across the board.

After attending the three-day Antalya Diplomacy Forum, the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir left Turkey for Brussels, Belgium on Sunday to attend the signing ceremony.

Secretary (Bilateral) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Md. Nazrul Islam will join.

On his way back home, the Foreign Minister is expected to make a stopover in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and will return to Bangladesh on April 24, said a senior official.

The fifth round of negotiations between Bangladesh and the European Union on the framework agreement was held in January this year.

Through the negotiations, both sides finalised the text of the agreement.

The negotiations on the proposed PCA started with the explanatory meeting between Bangladesh and the EU in Dhaka in November 2024.

Since then, the two sides engaged in five rounds of discussions and several technical meetings in Dhaka and Brussels, both physically and virtually.

The fifth round on focused particularly on some key thematic areas of mutual interests between Bangladesh and European Union including legal and judicial cooperation, intellectual property rights, energy cooperation, fisheries, aquaculture and ocean governance, trade and investment, human rights, customs cooperation, etc.



Chinese economic zone project in Ctg moves ahead after years of delay

INVESTMENT - BANGLADESH

JAHIR RAYHAN

Beza expects to finalise developer agreement by June

The long-delayed Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in Chattogram's Anwara is expected to enter the implementation stage by June, with the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (Beza) hoping to finalise a developer agreement after key negotiations with the Chinese side enter their final phase.

Beza Executive Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun told TBS yesterday, "We expect to sign the land developer agreement with China Road and Bridge Corporation by June."

Officials involved in the project said several important agreements and understandings are nearing completion, allowing work on the project's core infrastructure to begin.

The Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone, or CEIZ, is being developed on nearly 783 acres in Anwara, under a government-to-government arrangement. Despite its large investment potential, the project has remained stalled for more than nine years because no developer agreement has yet been signed.

However, Beza officials said renewed efforts began during the tenure of the interim government and that the pace of work has accelerated further under the new government.

▶ The foundation stone was laid during Xi Jinping's 2016 Dhaka visit

▶ In 2022, China Road and Bridge Corporation nominated as new developer

▶ CEIZ being developed on nearly 783 acres in Anwara

▶ Beza will implement the off-site infrastructure

▶ Total project cost estimated at Tk4,056 crore.



Around Tk2,136cr expected from Chinese govt as preferential buyer's credit

THE PROJECT INCLUDES:

- ▶ Construction of a jetty
- ▶ A connecting road between the jetty and CEIZ
- ▶ A central ETP and other necessary infrastructure

According to officials, the project was delayed for several reasons: Initially, China Harbour Engineering Company was expected to undertake the infrastructure development work. However, the failure to reach an agreement with the company resulted in several years of delay.

Later, in 2022, the Chinese government nominated China Road and Bridge Corporation as the new developer.

The preparation and approval of the development project proposal also took considerable time.

Under the project structure, Beza will implement the off-site infrastructure, including roads, gas, electricity and water connections, while the developer company will carry out the internal development work. Officials said these two parts of the project have not yet progressed in a fully coordinated manner.

Several Beza sources said that although there is a formal agreement with China to establish the economic zone, discussions over the Engineering, Procurement and

Construction contract were continuing until recently.

Those negotiations are now in their final stage. Once the contract is completed, Beza is expected to move ahead with the developer agreement.

On 14 March, Ashik, also executive chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida), presented a 180-day action plan to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, including implementation of the Chinese economic zone project.

Last week, Ashik also discussed the progress of the project during a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen.

The Beza executive chairman said the meeting had been productive and that both sides had agreed to prioritise the economic zone project in Anwara.

According to Bida, Ambassador Yao Wen said progress on the CEIZ project would send a strong positive message to Chinese investors.

Beza Deputy Secretary Mohammad Zakaria Mithu

said land acquisition for the project had been fully completed.

He said the project would be implemented with Chinese loans and that the institution nominated by the Chinese government would carry out the development work.

According to him, textiles, pharmaceuticals and light engineering are being given priority as the main potential investment sectors.

Project framework and financials

Beza has undertaken a fast-track project to establish the Chinese economic zone in Anwara. The total cost of the project has been estimated at Tk4,056 crore. Of that amount, \$21.18 million, equivalent to around Tk2,136 crore, is expected to come from the Chinese

will implement the project under the government-to-government arrangement. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2029. The economic zone is being established on the eastern bank of the Karnaphuli River in Anwara, around two kilometres from the Karnaphuli Tunnel.

The foundation stone for the project was laid in 2016 during the visit to Dhaka by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

At that time, China pledged to provide concessional loans for the implementation of the project. At present, Bangladesh has approved two foreign economic zones under government-to-government arrangements.

Among them, the Japanese economic zone in Narayanganj's Arahazar has already seen three companies begin production and

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The project includes construction of a jetty, a connecting road between the jetty and CEIZ, a central effluent treatment plant and other necessary infrastructure.

China Road and Bridge Corporation, acting on behalf of the Chinese government,

will implement the project under the government-to-government arrangement. The project is scheduled to be completed by June 2029. The economic zone is being established on the eastern bank of the Karnaphuli River in Anwara, around two kilometres from the Karnaphuli Tunnel.

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Among them, the Japanese economic zone in Narayanganj's Arahazar has already seen three companies begin production and is regarded as an example of comparatively rapid progress.

Officials believe that if the Chinese project overcomes its long-standing delays and is implemented successfully, it could play a major role in the country's industrialisation and serve as a significant platform for attracting both Chinese and other foreign investment.

