



ISSN 2617-6122
April 2021, Vol 06, Issue 01

CPA News

Premier Maritime Magazine of Bangladesh

50 Years of Independence Success beyond expectations

Bangabandhu

The supreme visionary of Maritime Bangladesh

Exclusive Interview

'I want to see Bangladesh as a sub-regional transshipment hub' - Rear Admiral M Shahjahan

Four more ports of Bangladesh and India are being added to the port of call

50
Years of
Bangladesh

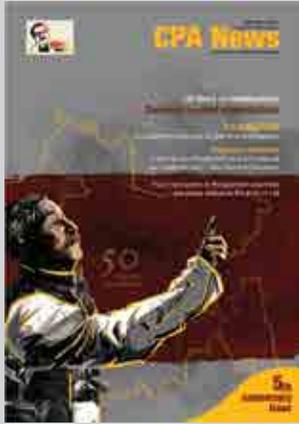
5th
anniversary
issue

ISSN 2617-6122

April 2021, Volume 06, Issue 01

CPA News

A Quarterly Publication of
Chattogram Port Authority



Chief Adviser

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

Editor

Zafar Alam

Board of Editorial

Rammya Rahim Choudhury
Md. Mominur Rashid
Md. Omar Faruque
Mahbub Morshed Chowdhury

Executive Editor

Tazul Haque

Senior Editor

Rajeev Ahmed

Contributors

Enamul Karim
Qazi Meraz Uddin Arif

Reporter

Omar Faroque Emon

Managing Editor

Monir H Khan

Public Relation

Mohammad Azizul Moula
A.N.M Faruk Hossain Chowdhury

Photography

SM Shamsul Huda

Design & DTP

Toufique Ahmed
Abida Hafsa
Mahmud Hossain Prince

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

Chattogram Port Authority
Bandar bhaban, Chattogram
Tel: 031-2510869
Email: bandarbartagmail.com

Editorial

Bangladesh celebrates its 50th year of independence with an accelerating economy

CPA News started its journey five years ago. Through this publication, interested readers including global port community and stakeholders are getting an opportunity to stay updated about the maritime sector of Bangladesh. CPA News also highlights the sustainable and environment friendly issues related to the maritime sector in tackling the global climate change crisis. On its journey to the sixth year, the publication vows to sensitize the maritime sector among the potential masses by regularly showcasing all domestic and international best practices in order to materialise the Vision 2041 of the government of Bangladesh. Important maritime personalities and stakeholders welcomed CPA News with encouraging messages on the auspicious occasion of the publication's sixth year. We have made those messages available in this issue for our readers.

Bangladesh is celebrating its 50th year of independence while its economy is accelerating at a breakneck rate. Agriculture is in a good place. Factories are springing up all over the place. People are being hired. The stock market is exploding. Bangladesh's achievements in health, education, gender equality, nutrition, and human growth are commendable. Bangladesh is, in many ways, ahead of its neighbours. Across the country, there is a lot of work being done on infrastructure growth. It is no longer a pipe dream to build the Padma Bridge with our own money. In Dhaka, construction on the Metrorail system is underway. The deep seaport's construction has also begun. There's a tinge of improvement in the air as well. Digital Bangladesh has also become a possibility thanks to information technology and timely initiatives of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. In this regard, our lead story highlights Bangladesh's remarkable progress during these five decades.

Bangabandhu, who was born and raised in riverine Bangladesh, was deeply interested in improving the lives of riverine and coastal people of Maritime Bangladesh. Furthermore, he had put a high value on the maritime sector, recognizing that it had the potential to become Bangladesh's economic powerhouse. In our 'Perspective' section, we have an article about Bangabandhu's vision and contribution to Bangladesh's maritime sector.

Rear Admiral M. Shahjahan, NPP, BCGMS, ndc, psc, (BN) joined the Chattogram Port Authority as chairman on 31 January 2021, after successfully completing his duties as chairman of the Mongla Port Authority. He recently spoke to CPA News about ports in Bangladesh, Blue Economy and the overall state of maritime affairs. This issue includes an exclusive interview of the chairman of the port authority.

In addition, the 'Newsbytes' section will keep you up to date on all of the major maritime events and developments that occurred in the first quarter of this year.

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

50 Years of Independence Success beyond expectations

07

According to the World Bank, in 1972 the per capita national income of Bangladesh was USD 120 but the per capita national income of Pakistan was USD 170. Since then, per capita national income has been steadily rising. Along with high growth, per capita national income rose to USD 1,940 in 2019, 27% higher than that of Pakistan.

02 Editorial

04 Inspirational Messages

CPA News was started five years ago with a vow to address the curiosity related to maritime sector. With this issue, CPA News set foot in the sixth year. At this auspicious occasion, important personalities and stakeholders of the maritime sector greeted CPA News.

20 News Bytes
Maritime infrastructure and business

- Bangabandhu's birthday celebration at Chattogram port
- Meghna group launches two new bulk carriers
- Ship docked at a private jetty for the first time
- Four more ports of Bangladesh and India are being added to the port of call
- Road and shipping sectors contribute 8% to GDP
- GSP for Bangladesh till 2027: UK
- Blue Economy has the potential to contribute 4% of GDP
- Container handling is on the rise at Chattogram port
- Qatar Petroleum will supply LNG to Bangladesh
- Patenga Container Terminal will be operated on PPP
- 44 years in container handling at Chattogram port
- ADB to invest in Dhirasram Inland Container Depot
- New route opened for transporting goods by sea to Bangladesh
- Turkey is interested in investing in Bangladesh

17 Bangabandhu
The supreme visionary of
Maritime Bangladesh

Perspective



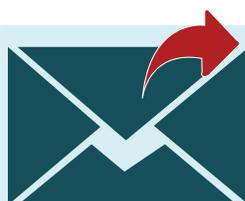
Bangabandhu committed himself to the new mission of building a 'Sonar Bangla' for the war-torn nation. In line, to defend the rights over our maritime zone, he took to the restructuring of the state for the maintenance of our sea resources and ensure economic emancipation.

12 'I want to see Bangladesh as a
sub-regional transshipment hub'
- Rear Admiral M Shahjahan

Exclusive Interview



The chairman of Chattogram Port Authority Rear Admiral M Shahjahan was commissioned as a naval officer on 1 January 1987. Afterwards, he was assigned multiple important roles in the Navy. He recently spoke to CPA News about ports in Bangladesh, Blue Economy and the overall state of maritime affairs.



We value your thoughts

CPA news is open to submissions exclusively from the maritime enthusiast writers. We are looking for strong, authentic and thought-provoking articles on maritime issues.

email your views to cpanews@gmail.com



Congratulations on a five-year journey

The maritime industry of Bangladesh is facing a major transformation, from the deep seaport to the vast work of the maritime economy, to become a high-income country. As a result, curiosity is growing among the general public about the ports and maritime related sectors. In this regard, CPA News was started five years ago with a vow to address that curiosity. With this issue, CPA News set foot in the sixth year. At this auspicious occasion, important personalities and partners of the maritime sector greeted CPA News.



Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, MP

State Minister for Ministry of Shipping

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations and best wishes to all concerned on the occasion of entering the sixth year of the quarterly publication CPA News of the Chattogram Port Authority with the aim of highlighting the overall development activities of the shipping sector, especially the Chattogram port.

Under the overall guidance and supervision of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bengali of all time, the great architect of independence and the father of the nation, the work of removing landmines laid by the Pakistani military at various places in Chattogram port began soon after independence. Bangabandhu undertook various activities for the development of Chattogram port like he started for the rest of the country with the aim to transform a war-ravaged country into his dreamt Sonar Bangla. But after only three and a half years of Bangabandhu's rule, the entire development activities came to a halt when the anti-independence group brutally assassinated Bangabandhu and most of his family members. Anti-independence groups continued to lead the country in the opposite direction. As a result, the desired development of the country became impossible.

The present Awami League government led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has been working relentlessly for the overall development of the country. Like other sectors, the government is playing a leading role in the development of shipping and ports. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has established the country's third seaport, 'Payra port'. Mongla port has been going through extensive development activities. Development and expansion of Chattogram port, construction of deep seaport at Matarbari, construction of Bay Terminal, Patenga Container Terminal, procurement of sophisticated equipment and other development works are progressing rapidly. Container Traffic Management System (CTMS) and Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS) have been introduced at Chattogram port, which is now ranked 57th out of 100 busy ports in terms of container handling. All this has been possible due to the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Hopefully, the CPA News will reflect the overall development of the country as well as the shipping and port sector. I am confident that CPA News will continue serving as the mouthpiece for maritime development.

I wish the overall success of CPA News.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh live forever.



Mohammad Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury

Secretary, Ministry of Shipping

The Chattogram port is an integral part of Bangladesh's economic development. It is also the gateway to the country's import-export trade.

It is impossible to think of moving forward without Chattogram port. The role of Chattogram port is very important to realise the goal of becoming a high-income country by 2041. Because, huge import-export trade will be facilitated through seaports. It is important to keep the seaport prepared for the coming decade. As part of this, a deep seaport is being constructed at Matarbari. The capacity of the existing seaports including Chattogram port is also being increased. It is accepted by all that Blue Economy is the most important sector for Bangladesh to become a sustainable and prosperous country.

The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman laid the foundation of Blue Economy by enacting the 'Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act 1974'. And under the visionary and strong leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the opportunity has been created to reap the benefits of Blue Economy through exploration and exploitation of sea resources.

In order to benefit from this sector in materialising the Vision 2041, the new generation of entrepreneurs and policy makers should be made interested through various publications and campaigns. The CPA News has been doing this work with devotion for five years by regularly presenting all domestic and best practices in the maritime sector. With this publication, interested readers including global port community and stakeholders are getting an opportunity to stay updated about the maritime sector of Bangladesh. In addition, the publication highlights the sustainable and environment friendly issues related to the maritime sector in tackling the global climate change crisis. I hope that the future path of the CPA News will be more smooth and successful.



Rear Admiral M Shahjahan

Chairman, Chattogram Port Authority

The seaport is an integrated logistics centre of the global transport system. Ports also have to go through constant changes to adapt to national and international needs and the environment. In the interest of smooth, safe and prudent performance of all activities, it is necessary to develop the skills of manpower as well as procure the latest equipment and assimilate the latest technology. All this is done to facilitate the port users as well as the import-export activities. Naturally, the international and domestic port users have to know specific and up-to-date information on these matters. They are getting updated information about the port through CPA News. Interested readers can also find answers to their queries on maritime and port issues from the publication.

CPA News not only provides information, but also the analyses in simple language, in an understandable way. We are also able to read various explanatory articles on various issues happening in the maritime sector of Bangladesh. In that case, a maritime publication like CPA News in English language is undoubtedly an important footstep. In the dream of becoming a developed country, according to the Vision 2041, we need to showcase our maritime potentials in order to get foreign investment. To that end, there is no alternative to a maritime magazine in English language. Thanks to the CPA News for doing that practice with dedication and responsibility for five years. I hope it will continue this trend in the future.



Rear Admiral Md Khurshed Alam (ret'd)

Secretary (Maritime Affairs Unit), Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Bangladesh is establishing itself as an important country in the world considering the immense potential of the Blue Economy and geopolitical position after the settlement of maritime disputes with Myanmar and India under the visionary and strong leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Bangladesh will be able to accelerate

the process of sustainable development by ensuring proper use of unused and undiscovered resources at sea. Using marine resources has the potential to create huge jobs, including poverty alleviation, food and energy security. Its sustainable exploration and exploitation as well as increasing the maximum utility of the Blue Economy will play an important role in improving the living condition of the people of Bangladesh.

One of the most important sectors of the Blue Economy is shipping, which plays a direct role in GDP growth. About 90% of the world's commercial goods are transported by sea as it is a relatively affordable, reliable and efficient mode of transportation. This sector helps in creating employment in both port and ship management. In FY 2018-19, more than 95% of the total commercial transport in Bangladesh has been conducted by sea and through three major seaports. Bangladesh spends more than USD 9 billion a year on ship chartering, almost all of which is taken by foreign shipowners.

However, the reality is that development activities in this sector are not being carried out properly. More importance should be given to the creation and development of waterways like it is being given to the roads and highways. If waterways could be made more popular, comfortable and affordable, waterways would be of special importance as a good alternative to the roads and highways. It is necessary to increase the mutual understanding of the shipowners and workers, to modernise the maritime education to create skilled and smart sailors, to ensure that the river is not polluted and occupied. Appropriate steps should be taken to properly enforce the law and control chaos in the waterways. To ensure maximum utilisation of the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal, its capacity needs to be enhanced and the connecting roads especially Kalkindi-Hemayetpur and Pangaon-Hasnabad need to be improved. Besides, we need to take immediate steps to increase the number of domestic flagged ships.

The media has to play a key role in encouraging government investment as well as private investment and initiative in this promising sector. The CPA News has been doing that for five years. To make the prospects of the shipping sector a reality, on this special occasion to fifth year anniversary, I hope that the publication will highlight the challenges and possibilities involved.



Rear Admiral M Khaled Iqbal (ret'd)

Vice Chancellor,
Bangabandhu Sheikh
Mujibur Rahman Maritime
University

The maritime sector is becoming increasingly important in Bangladesh.

The new door of Blue Economy has opened before us thanks to the strong leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who founded sovereign rights in the vast area of the Bay of Bengal. Today, we are progressing along the development highway with the aim of realising the current government's "Vision-2041." That is why we think the Blue Economy will play an important role in the action plan we have put in place to join the developed world's club. The time has come to harvest our valuable maritime resources and boldly walk into this market. This necessitates the use of qualified human resources. To that end, the country's first maritime university, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University, is working to keep pace with the rest of the world in maritime higher education and to extend international opportunities for maritime research.

Both Chattogram port and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University are woven with the same thread. The main aim of this university is to develop a new generation of highly qualified and trained individuals to work in port-related institutions.

CPA News has been providing objective information on various aspects of the maritime industry. The five-year journey of the publication is unquestionably admirable. I'm hoping that their journey will continue to be fruitful in the future.



Commodore Golam Sadeq

Chairman, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority

A port's competitiveness is influenced by both internal and external factors. Improved inland shipping infrastructure would certainly increase

capacity by connecting the seaport to the hinterland. The European Union is paying close attention to this problem in order to improve the port's long-term viability and performance. Furthermore, inland waterway transportation of goods is safer, more cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable than other modes of transportation. In light of these concerns, Bangladesh's government is placing a high priority on the construction of inland waterways. During this government's term, a proposal was put in place to open 10,000 kilometres of waterways by 2024. As a result, extensive river dredging has begun. Several waterways are also being created to ensure the smooth and secure transportation of goods. The process of restoring the navigability of inland waterways has also made significant progress. Its advantages can also be used in goods transportation. However, after completing the entire activity, you will be eligible for 100% of the benefits. After five years of publication, I hope that the news of inland waterways as a vital mode of transportation can reach everyone via CPA News.



Md. Sirajul Islam

Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority

Bangladesh has made unprecedented economic progress under the able leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The development of Bangladesh is a role model for the world today.

The present government is working relentlessly to build a developed Bangladesh by 2041. That is why the importance of investment is immense. And the precondition for attracting domestic and foreign investment at a large rate is the development of investment environment. The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) is working diligently to improve the investment environment and facilitate business through coordination with various ministries, departments and agencies of the government. The business environment has already become much easier through various reform activities. It is also being highlighted in the local and international media through various campaigns. In addition, BIDA is working meticulously to provide various services to easily using digital technology. Meanwhile, 41 services of 11 organisations are being provided online through BIDA's One Stop Service. We hope to increase the number of services to 150 soon. By improving all the indices, our country is rapidly moving to a better position in the Ease of Doing Business rankings. That will be a great achievement for BIDA and the country. CPA News is bringing this information of our achievement with objectivity. Publication like CPA News is essential for the overall business development of the country. Best wishes to the publication on the completion of five years of CPA News.



K. M. Tariqul Islam

Chairman, Bangladesh Land Port Authority

International trade plays a critical role in every country's economic development. In other words, the rate at which a country will advance is largely

determined by the growth of imports and exports. And a port is the entry point for this import-export trade. It doesn't matter if it's a seaport, a naval or a land port. Bangladesh Land Port Authority protects land ports and facilitates import-export trade. Through the construction of port facilities, the implementation of modern technology in the handling and storage of goods, and the recruitment of operators in government partnerships, the authority is providing reliable and cost-effective services to international traders. CPA News is dedicated to providing all relevant information about land ports to all interested parties, especially importers and exporters. CPA News deserves congratulations for five years of presenting information with the utmost professionalism. At the same time, there was a hope that the road ahead would be less bumpy.



Commodore A Z M Jalal Uddin

Director General, Department of Shipping

Maritime is a big sector with a lot of promises. The importance of this sector in social and economic development is immense. Maritime transport, ports, marine engineering and Blue Economy are the major components of this sector. That is to say, they are not isolated, they are inextricably

linked. Proper, efficient and timely performance of each component keeps the maritime sector afloat. The Department of Shipping has a huge role to play in this regard and it has been playing that role with utmost attention and efficiency. The department is carrying out regular inspections alongside fitness checks and entry-exit permits under the port state control of foreign ships arriving in the ports of Bangladesh. The department is also working to make the movement of Bangladeshi flagged ships in international waters uninterrupted. It is also playing a big role in creating skilled human resources in the maritime sector. In addition to supervising maritime training institutes, regular training is being provided to young sailors onboard ocean-going ships. The Department of Shipping is also working with equal efficiency to keep the maritime borders of Bangladesh safe by preventing piracy and illegal activities onboard commercial ships.

Now, everyone is getting to know the objective and up-to-date information of these activities through CPA News. On the occasion of fifth anniversary of CPA News, I hope that this quarterly magazine will be more developed and successful.



50 Years of Independence Success beyond expectations

Jinarul Islam

Pakistan was born with a strange geographical isolation; according to many, as a 'defective baby'. West Pakistan on one side and East Pakistan on the other, separated by one thousand miles of Indian land in the middle. If two of a person's lungs are separated by a distance of one thousand miles, that person cannot survive. That was what happened. A new country was born by breaking free from the trap of plutocracy. That country was Bangladesh. Where does Bangladesh stand after fifty years of independence? It is broken down into three sections in this article. The first section examines Bangladesh's improvement in several socioeconomic indices during the course of its five decades of independence. The focus has been on the discrimination of policies between the two regions in undivided Pakistan to understand the background of this progress. The second section assesses Bangladesh's position in South Asia, while the third section shows Bangladesh's worldwide position in key areas.

Socio-economic progress in five decades

It was clear from the start of the partition of India and Pakistan that the central West Pakistan government's resource distribution and economic policies would be discriminatory towards East Pakistan. As a result, economic disparities between Pakistan's two regions emerged within two decades. Professor Rehman Sobhan highlighted discriminations in four areas of government policy in his book "Evolution of Bangladesh: An eyewitness commentary": trade policy, exchange rate policy, foreign exchange rate fixation, federal finance, and foreign policy. Government expenditure allocation policy, foreign aid allocation policy, foreign exchange allocation policy, exchange rate and import policy have

always been biased towards West Pakistan. As a result, Bangladesh lags behind West Pakistan in terms of GDP, per capita income and standard of living.

In the 50th year of independence, the economy of Bangladesh is growing rapidly. It is moving forward at breakneck speed. The capital market is booming. Agriculture is stable. More crops can now be harvested with less cultivation work. This is thanks to the magic of Ufshi breeding and mechanisation. Four crore tons of food grains are being harvested every year.

The development of industries has been in tandem with agriculture. Factories are being constructed everywhere. People are getting jobs. As a result, the young people who are part of the workforce are less depressed. The development of capital is making the growth of the economy look very promising.

Bangladesh's success in every important indicator of health, education, gender equality, nutrition and human development is enviable. In fact, in many cases Bangladesh is ahead of its neighbours. Plenty of work regarding infrastructure development is going on across the country. Building the Padma Bridge with our own finances is no longer a dream. Construction work for metrorail is going on in Dhaka. The construction work of deep seaport has also started. There is a touch of change everywhere. With the help of information technology, digital Bangladesh has also become a reality.

8% GDP Growth

In 1971, during the year of the war, Bangladesh's growth became negative 5.48%. However, in the 2018-19 fiscal year,

the growth of the economy of Bangladesh crossed the 8% mark for the first time and reached 8.15%. Even in the year of the pandemic, the growth of Bangladesh did not fall below 5%. According to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2020 calendar year, Bangladesh achieved 3.55% growth in 2020. Only Guyana and South Sudan have seen higher growth than Bangladesh this year.

However, this growth is not magical. Many steps had to be conquered to reach the peak of growth.

Per capita income which was USD 120 is now USD 2064

As a result of rapid economic development and diversification in West Pakistan compared to East Pakistan, there was a huge disparity in per capita income between the two regions. In 1949-50, the per capita income inequality between West Pakistan and East Pakistan was 32.5%. In 1969-70 this increased to 61%.

Following this path of inequality, Bangladesh became an independent country with an income of only USD 120 per capita. The only thing left to do then was to move forward. In 2020, the per capita income of Bangladesh reached USD 2064.

Extreme poverty rate is 10%

Due to severe economic inequality, a large portion of the population of East Pakistan fell below the poverty line before independence. In 1970, more than 80% of the total population of East Pakistan was below the poverty line. Bangladesh has gradually come out of that situation due to inclusive growth and financial management strategies as well as increased employment in the local and international labour markets. Large sections of the poor have emerged from extreme poverty by relying on comprehensive social security programmes. In 2019, the poverty rate in the country has come down to 20%. And extreme poverty rate is now 10%.

Exports increased from USD 630 million to USD 40 billion

According to the World Bank, the financial value of East Pakistan's exports in 1960 was USD 656,651,572. In 1970, the year before the liberation war, this amount increased to USD 877,564,827. However, during 1971, Bangladesh was able to earn only USD 635,198,087 from the export. From the 80's onwards, export earnings started to become the mainstay of Bangladesh's economy through the garments industry. Over the next decade, export earnings increased by 80%. In the 2018-19 fiscal year, Bangladesh's export income exceeded USD 40 billion and reached USD 40.53 billion. Due to unfavourable global conditions, exports have declined significantly in the 2019-20 fiscal year, but they are still above USD 33 billion. Apart from garment products, pharmaceuticals, steel, cement, and ceramics have emerged as new export sectors.

Acceleration in foreign direct investment

The government has undertaken major reforms to attract more foreign direct investment. Under the reform programme, which started in the 90's, facilities such as tax exemption on investment for several years, import of capital equipment with duty-free facility, 100% foreign ownership in the company, reinvestment of profits, multiple visas, work permits for foreign executives and Export Processing Zones (EPZ) are given. Besides, the government has paid special attention to the development of the business environment. As a result, in 2018, Bangladesh was able to attract USD 3.61 billion in foreign direct investment. However, foreign direct investment has declined worldwide in 2019. Global foreign direct investment fell by 42% during the year. Bangladesh was no exception. According to UNCTAD statistics, foreign direct investment in Bangladesh in 2019 stood at USD 1.6 billion.

Share of manufacturing sector in GDP

Until a long time after independence, Bangladesh's economy was import-dependent. The manufacturing sector accounted for a small share of the GDP. According to the World Bank, in 1972, the year after independence, the manufacturing sector accounted for only 4% of GDP. Later, the government adopted the strategy of import-alternative industrialisation to protect the infantile industries. These reforms in the industrial sectors in the 80's and 90's helped to increase the share of industry in GDP. In 2019, the share of industry in the GDP of Bangladesh stood at 18%. Similarly,

Indicators with notable growth

GDP growth rate

Year	Growth
1971	-5.48%
2018-19	8.15%
2019-20	5.2%

Per capita income

Year	Income
1973	120 Dollar
2020	2064 Dollar

Poverty rate

Year	Poverty rate
1970	80%
2019	20%

Foreign direct investment

Year	Investment
1971	90 Thousand Dollar
2018-19	3.6 Billion Dollar

Crop production

Year	Amount
1972	99 Lac Ton
2020	4.54 Crore ton

Production sector's contribution to GDP

Year	Contribution
1972	4%
2020	18%

Access to electricity

Year	Rate of access to electricity
1991	14%
2018-19	99%

Literacy rate

Year	Literacy rate
1974	26.8%
2019	74.7%

Average life expectancy

Year	Average life expectancy
1972	46.6 Year
2020	72.6 Year

Maternal mortality rate (In every 1 lac)

Year	Death
1975	600
2017	173

Child mortality rate (In every 1 thousand)

Year	Death
1973	167
2020	21

Gender equality (Participation of women into labour force)

Year	Women in labour force
1996	15.8%
2017	36.3%

Milestone recognition

1. Recognition from the United Nations Committee for Development for its transition from a least developed country to a middle-income country.
2. Upgraded from a low income country to a low-middle income country in terms of per capita income.
3. Recognised as one of the role models in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Source:
1. Pakistan Economic Survey 1969-70
2. World Bank
3. BBS

the share of unproductive sector in GDP has increased from 2% in 1972 to 11% in 2019. To speed up the industrialisation process more, the government is setting up 100 special economic zones across the country.

Rapid infrastructure development

In 1947-48, in terms of miles West Pakistan had more roads, and railways and automobiles in terms of number than East Pakistan. In the following years, however, this inequality became more widespread.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 1969-70, the roads in East Pakistan increased six-fold to 2,588 miles in 1967-68 compared to 1951-52. However, it is negligible compared to 22,508 miles of roads in West Pakistan. Similarly, the railway line in East Pakistan was 1,712 miles as against 5,334 miles in West Pakistan in 1967-68.

During the war of liberation in 1971, the army of West Pakistan practically destroyed the communication infrastructures in East Pakistan. After independence, the new government started investing in communication infrastructure. Following this, the length of railways and roads has increased. At present, there are 55,000 kilometres of paved roads in the country. Of these, the length of highways under the Department of Roads and Highways is 22,096 km. The length of the 99 national highways in the country is 3,906 kilometres. According to the Ministry of Railways, meter-gauge, broad-gauge and dual-gauge railways in Bangladesh have been upgraded to 2,885 kilometres. Of this, 2,656 kilometres are in operation. However, despite being an important means of transportation, inland waterways have declined in the five decades since independence. The length of waterways that are navigable all year round is now 3,800 km, which is increased to 6,000 km during the monsoon season. However, work is underway to increase the length of the waterway to 10,000 kilometres.

After Bangabandhu Bridge, Padma Bridge has also become a reality now. A tunnel is also being constructed at the bottom of Karnaphuli river. Besides, river excavation work is going on for the development of waterways. In addition to increasing the capacity of Chattogram and Mongla ports, Payra and Matarbari deep sea ports are being constructed. Bangladesh has also joined space communication through the launch of Bangabandhu Satellite-1.

Goods handling increased 17 times

In the immediate years after independence, imports were conducted more through seaports. The amount of export was also

small as the export products outside jute were limited. According to the data of the first five-year plan, the volume of import and export goods through Chattogram and Chalna (now Mongla) ports in the fiscal year 1973-74 was 57 lac 80 thousand tons. Of this, 35 lac 87 thousand tons were transported through Chattogram port. In the five decades of independence, cargo transportation through seaports has increased to about 100 million tons. In the 2018-19 financial year, 98 million 240 thousand tons of cargo has been transported through the seaports. At the same time, container handling has been 2.9 million TEUs.

Food production has risen 354%

The amount of food grains produced in 1972, the year after independence, was less than one crore metric tons. Only 99 lac metric tons of food grains were produced in the country that year. In 2020, the production of food grains had reached 454 lac metric tons. Bangladesh is now self-sufficient in the other sectors of agriculture such as fish, poultry and meat production. This has been made possible by the mechanisation of agriculture, innovation of new varieties of crops and an increase in crop density.

99% of people within the reach of electricity

The most urgent need in economic development is the availability of electricity and fuel. Even in 1991, only 14% of the people had access to electricity. In 2021, it has increased to 99%. This has been possible due to the formulation of the master plan of the present government around the power sector and its implementation accordingly. In 2009, there were 27 power plants in the country. In 2020, this number has increased to 147. The capacity to generate power from captive and renewable sources stands at 25,171 MW. In contrast to the capacity, the maximum production has reached 13,377 MW. The number of electricity subscribers has increased from 108 lac in 2009 to 396 lac at present time.

Literacy rate has almost tripled

In the last five decades, Bangladesh has achieved unexpected success in almost all indicators of human development. Education is the main one among them. Even in 1974, three years after independence, the literacy rate in Bangladesh was only 26.8%. It took until 2011 to bring the rate close to 50%. As a result of well-thought-out planning and smooth implementation, the literacy rate has been increasing rapidly ever since.

According to the World Bank, in 2019, the literacy rate in Bangladesh reached 74.7%. At this time, the enrollment of students in primary schools has increased to almost 100%. At the primary level, the dropout rate has dropped to 18%, which is acting as a regulator to increase the literacy rate.

Average life expectancy has increased by 26 years in five decades

The average lifespan of a person depends on several variables. Quality of life, access to health care, nutrition and economic status play a special role in this regard. None of these were readily available in the years following independence. Even in 1972, the average life expectancy of the people of Bangladesh was only 46.6 years. With the economic development of the people as well as the ease of access to nutrition and health care, the average life expectancy of the people of Bangladesh in 2020 was 72.6 years.

Unimaginable success in reducing maternal and child mortality rate

Despite this region's large population after the creation of Pakistan, access to health care was much lower than in West Pakistan. According to the Pakistan Statistical Yearbook, there were 26,200 beds in West Pakistan hospitals in 1966. But in East Pakistan there were a total of 6,984 beds. There was also a clear disparity in the number of doctors. In 1969, there were only 88,100 doctors in East Pakistan compared to 131,000 in West Pakistan. Naturally, the availability of healthcare was not at the desired level. As might be expected, most of the child births were non-institutional. At the same time, maternal and child mortality rates were high due to lack of nutrition. According to the World Bank, even in 1975, for every 1 lac births, 800 mothers died. In 1990 this number was 574. For the same reason, in 1973, 167 out of a thousand children died. However, maternal mortality has declined by 75% in five decades due to improved health services, especially maternal and child health services and nutrition. In 2017, the maternal mortality rate came down to 173 per 1 lac newborns. In addition, in 2020, the child mortality rate came down to 21 per thousand.

Enviably achievement in gender equality

As a result of the wide participation of women in various socio-economic sectors, Bangladesh has achieved unexpected success in gender equality. For the second year in a row Bangladesh has topped the list of South Asian countries in the Gender Equality Index 2020. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2020,

overall, Bangladesh has reduced gender inequality by 73%. From 1996 to 2017, the participation of women in the workforce has increased from 15.8% to more than 36%, whereas South Asia averages 35%.

The position of Bangladesh in South Asia in socio-economic indicators

The story of independent Bangladesh and subsequent success is completely different. In the 50 years of independence, Bangladesh has surpassed Pakistan in many socio-economic indicators. Some indicators have surpassed India. Bangladesh's position in South Asia is now at another height in many economic and social indicators.

Bangladesh is ahead of India and Pakistan in GDP per capita

After independence, the economy of Bangladesh was devastated. In 1972, the per capita GDP of the newly independent country was only USD 94.38 (at current prices). Even then, Pakistan's per capita GDP was above USD 153. Due to the new initiative in the economic restructuring of the country, the per capita GDP of Bangladesh reached USD 257.57 in 1975. But Pakistan's GDP per capita came down to USD 168. Although the GDP growth rate of Bangladesh came to a standstill in the aftermath of Bangabandhu's assassination, the opening up of the economy to the private sector in the 90's made the GDP flourish. In 2019, at the current price Bangladesh's per capita GDP rose to USD 1,855.74. At the same time, Pakistan's per capita GDP is USD 1,284.7.

Bangladesh's per capita GDP is expected to reach USD 1,888 in 2020, according to a forecast by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). India's per capita GDP is expected to be USD 1,877. In other words, Bangladesh's per capita GDP is now higher than India's. Nepal's per capita GDP was USD 1,071 in 2019 according to the World Bank, while Afghanistan's was USD 507. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, had a per capita GDP of USD 3,853, while the Maldives had a per capita GDP of USD 10,625 and Bhutan had a per capita GDP of USD 3,316.

Contribution of trade to GDP has also surpassed the target

Due to biased economic and trade policies, trade in the region did not flourish in erstwhile East Pakistan until independence. According to the World Bank, trade contributed more than 20% to GDP from

1960 to 1967, but fell to 17% in 1971. Immediately after independence in 1972, the share of trade in GDP increased slightly to 19.4%. However, the policy of economic liberalisation in the 90's brought a new momentum to trade. In 1995, it reached 28.2%. The contribution of trade to the GDP increased to 48.1% in 2012 on the basis of various trade-oriented reform programmes and increase in the purchasing power of the people. Although it could not be sustained for the next few years, the contribution of trade to GDP in 2019 was still above 36% (36.76%).

On the other hand, in the last 50 years, the contribution of trade to Pakistan's GDP has been reached close to 40%. In 1993, the share of trade in the country's GDP rose to 38.5%, the highest ever. According to the World Bank, the latest contribution of trade to Pakistan's GDP in 2019 was 30.44% less than that of Bangladesh. Trade contributed for 40% of India's GDP in 2019, while it accounted for 55% of Nepal's GDP, 52% of Sri Lanka's GDP, and 84% of Bhutan's GDP.

Success in attracting FDI

Due to high economic growth, Bangladesh has maintained stability in the macro-economy for a long time. Government debt is also at a satisfactory level. But the biggest strength of this multifaceted open economy is the adequacy of affordable labour. In terms of geography, Bangladesh is likewise in a strong position. At the same time, as a result of various business reforms, foreign investors are becoming interested in Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh has surpassed Pakistan in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the last decade.

In 2018, Bangladesh was able to attract more investment than Pakistan. In that year, the inflow of foreign direct investment in Pakistan was USD 1,737,000,000 but in Bangladesh it was USD 3,613,000,000. The following year, however, Pakistan made some progress.

According to UNCTAD's Global Investment Report 2020, FDI inflows to Bangladesh in 2019 were USD 1.6 billion, compared to USD 2.21 billion in Pakistan. According to Bangladesh Bank, FDI inflows were USD 2.87 billion in 2019. In that same year, FDI inflows to India totalled USD 50.55 billion. FDI inflows were lower in all other South Asian nations than in Bangladesh. Sri Lanka received USD 0.758 billion in FDI in 2019, Nepal received USD 0.185 billion, the Maldives received USD 0.565 billion, and Afghanistan received USD 80 million.

Although Bangladesh ranks second among South Asian countries in attracting FDI, the

amount is still much less than expected. To get out of this, we need policy support and improvement in the business environment. That effort is going on through various reforms.

Foreign currency reserves are now three times higher

Bangladesh has been able to create a strong foreign exchange reserve by depending on a combination of active investment, high exports, and expatriate income. For several years, Bangladesh Bank has kept more dollars in foreign currency than it requires to meet its six-month import expenses.

According to the World Bank, at the end of 2019, Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves stood at USD 32.7 billion. The amount is almost double that of Pakistan. At the end of 2019, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves were only USD 16.59 billion. In June 2020, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves plummeted to USD 10 billion. Although the foreign exchange reserves were somewhat stronger due to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans, they did not exceed USD 13.4 billion at the end of December 2020. But at the same time, Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves stood at 43 billion dollars, with which it is possible to pay 10 months' import obligations.

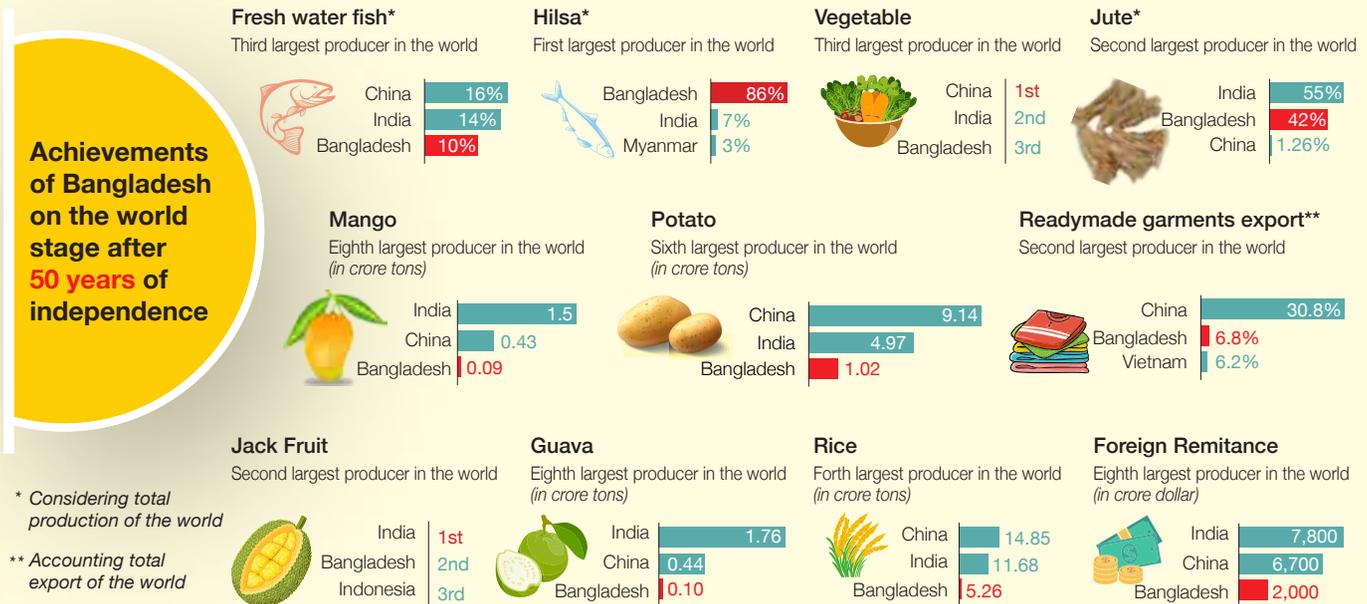
In South Asia, only India has bigger foreign exchange reserves than Bangladesh. The country's foreign exchange reserves were USD 589.35 billion in December-June 2020. Nepal's foreign exchange reserves were USD 11.65 billion in August of that year. It was USD 5.55 billion for Sri Lanka, USD 1.49 billion for Bhutan, and USD 0.98 billion for the Maldives.

National per capita income is 27% higher than Pakistan

According to the World Bank, in 1972 the per capita national income of Bangladesh was USD 120 but the per capita national income of Pakistan was USD 170. Since then, per capita national income has been steadily rising. Along with high growth, per capita national income rose to USD 1,940 in 2019, 27% higher than that of Pakistan. In 2019, Pakistan's per capita national income was USD 1,410. In addition, Bangladesh reached the milestone of USD 1,036 per capita income being a middle-income country in 2015. And Bangladesh's per capita national income in the fiscal year 2019-20 was USD 2,064.

India's per capita national income in 2019 was USD 2,120, Bhutan's was USD 3,140, Maldives' was USD 9,680, Nepal's was USD 1,090, Sri Lanka's was USD 4,020, and

After 50 years of independence, Bangladesh is in the top 10 in many production sectors of the world



* Considering total production of the world

** Accounting total export of the world

Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Fish and Department of Fisheries, EPB, Bangladesh Bank, BBS, Ministry of Finance, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Courtesy: Prothom Alo

Afghanistan's was USD 530, according to the World Bank.

Ahead in other social indicators as well

In the 50 years of independence, the young workforce has made a significant contribution to the economic development of Bangladesh. At the same time, women's participation in the labour force is increasing at a significant rate, especially in the export-oriented garment industry. According to the World Bank, 36% of women aged 15 and over in Bangladesh are actively involved in economic activities. In Pakistan, only 22% of women of this age are actively involved in economic activities. According to the World Bank, the rate in India is 21.5%. In other words, Bangladesh is ahead of Pakistan and even India in terms of the participation of women over 15 years old in the labour force.

Bangladesh is also in a better position than Pakistan in the index of economic freedom in 2020. Although Pakistan is in 152nd position in this index, Bangladesh is in 120th position. Bangladesh is even ahead of India in the index. India ranks 121st in the Economic Freedom Index, one step behind Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is also one step ahead of Pakistan in the Business to Consumer E-commerce rankings.

Milestone recognition

Bangladesh has received recognition from the United Nations Committee for Development for its transition from a least developed country to a middle-income country. In February 2021, for the second time after 2018, the United Nations has recommended Bangladesh for fulfilling all the three conditions of transition to a developing country. The honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has credited the people of the country for this great and glorious achievement. "We have achieved this milestone through the combined efforts of all," she said.

Earlier in 2015, Bangladesh was upgraded from a low income country to a low-middle income country in terms of per capita income of the World Bank. In terms of per capita income, Bangladesh is on the way to becoming an upper-middle income country by the end of 2021. Besides, Bangladesh has been recognised as one of the role models in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Bangladesh has shown remarkable success in poverty alleviation, food security, primary education, mortality reduction, vaccination and prevention of infectious diseases. Special plans have also been made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The government has also included

the issue in the Eighth Five Year Plan, Delta Plan 2100 and Perspective Plan 2041.

Final words

In the eyes of international economists, Bangladesh's economic progress is astonishing. The poorest part of undivided Pakistan is now the emerging economy, disproving the basket case theory. According to the UK's Centre for Economics and Business Research, Bangladesh will be the 25th largest economy in the world by 2035. According to Kaushik Basu, former chief economist at the World Bank, Bangladesh is now Asia's success story. Even two decades ago, that was beyond imagination. However, like all economies, there are risks such as corruption and income inequality. Will Bangladesh be able to sustain its economic progress by tackling these risks? However, Kaushik Basu is finding ample reason for optimism in the Prime Minister's commitment to address these risks. All other economists are also optimistic. And in the words of honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, 'Bangladesh ten years ago and Bangladesh today are not the same. Today's Bangladesh is a transformed Bangladesh.'

Jinarul Islam

Journalist

(Translated from Bandarbartha March 2021)



After successfully completing his duties as the chairman of Mongla Port Authority, Rear Admiral M. Shahjahan, NPP, BCGMS, ndc, psc, (BN), joined the Chattogram Port Authority as the chairman on 31 January 2021. Prior to this, he was the Deputy Director General of the Bangladesh Coast Guard, and was also responsible for the members of Chattogram port (Harbour). He was also responsible for members of the Blue Economy cell in the ministry of power, energy, and mineral resources.

Rear Admiral M. Shahjahan commenced his professional life when he joined the Bangladesh Navy as a cadet back in 24 July 1984. He was commissioned as an officer on 1 January 1987. Afterwards, he was assigned multiple important roles in the Navy. Under the UN mission, he led the team of military observers in Sierra Leone and also worked in Haiti as a peacekeeping officer for BANCON-2. He recently spoke to CPA News about ports in Bangladesh, Blue Economy and the overall state of maritime affairs.

‘I want to see Bangladesh as a sub-regional transshipment hub’

Rear Admiral M. Shahjahan
Chairman, Chattogram Port Authority

After five years of success, CPA News is now in its sixth year of publication. Do you have something you'd like to say to the readers of CPA News?

CPA News has become a phenomenon and the supreme milestone for maritime sensitisation in Bangladesh. From the start, you have taken CPA News forward as a publication with current and standard contents in English language. I believe that by maintaining the regularity and upgrading the publication in phases, CPA News will make an important contribution to the maritime awareness of Bangladesh.

You were once a member of the Chattogram Port Authority (Harbour), after which you became the chairman of the Mongla Port Authority. Following that you then took the position of chairman of the Chattogram Port Authority. What are your thoughts on the new responsibilities?

I have been responsible for the role of a member of the Chattogram Port Authority (Harbour) in the past. This experience has proved to be invaluable when it came to taking up the role of the chairman. I believe this experience and knowledge will be extremely helpful for me to carry out my duties as the chairman.

As a member (Harbour) my duties were focused on a specific field. Now, I shall need to plan the overall development of the port. To put it another way, my responsibilities as chairman are far broader. I have to consider the country's overall economic activities and do whatever possible to keep it healthy. The port plays an essential role because the entire maritime trade is dependent on it and maritime transportation is the driving force of our economy. Importers and exporters also rely on the port for conducting their activities. They have to face massive losses if their products fail to reach their destination at the right time. Exporters have to deal with the added risk of export orders being cancelled if the products do not reach the right port at the right time. In fact, this has occurred multiple times. Therefore, the port always has to strive shipping export products without any delay.

Ports are becoming increasingly important for economic development all over the world. Countries like China and Singapore have achieved incredible levels of economic success, thanks to their port-led development plans. The government of Bangladesh has also taken up and implemented various plans surrounding ports. What are our priorities for establishing a safe port sector for the future of Bangladesh?



Sea ports can be seen as a lighthouse for the economy. When it comes to the imports and exports of a country, ports play the key role. Since Sheikh Hasina became the honourable prime minister, various plans which involved increasing the capacity and expanding the periphery of work in ports have been undertaken. The development and expansion of port capacity has become one of the most important regulators of national growth.

Several development projects are underway in the country, with the aim of becoming a developed one by 2041. At the same time, establishing an easy and smooth line of communication with the ports is also being taken into consideration. The price of goods is determined by adding the cost of production to the cost of transportation, so if the cost of transportation rises, the cost of goods will rise as well. This, in turn, would have an impact on the market. As a result, our biggest challenge right now is exporting goods as smoothly and quickly as possible, as well as ensuring that imported goods are transported to the hinterlands. The government has plans to build production centres near the ports. As a result, a number of new ports and terminals are being built along the coast. Alongside this, we also have to construct a strong infrastructure between the ports and all nearby and distant industrial zones. To maintain a competitive edge in the export goods industry, it is crucial to decrease lead time along with ensuring the quality of goods. A strong communication infrastructure and well organised ports are

essential for achieving this. Singapore is a port-dependent country, and its efficiency has taken it to the height of success. If there are even minor inadequacies in the process of sending imported goods to hinterlands or getting the export goods onto ships efficiently and on time, this can negatively affect the country's economy. We are currently working on eliminating these risks following the government's guidelines and appropriate decisions. Presently there are also many other ongoing plans involving the development of port infrastructure and expanding the periphery of its work.

Our economy is growing every day. Along with this there is a growing demand for container handling at the Chattogram port. What are some of the port-centric plans to meet these growing demands?

If we take the COVID-19 pandemic out of the equation, the Chattogram port has been experiencing double digit growth for the last few years. In the last six years, container handling increased more than double and this growth was aided by the uninterrupted growth of Chattogram port's capacity. This has been made possible by getting the cargo transport sector back on track and overcoming the tariff and duty barriers.

Our ports must play a much larger role if we are to become a developed country by 2041. To reach the intended goal, we have to achieve a growth of 9% by 2031, and a growth of 9.9% by 2041. In this case exports and imports will be the prime regulators. By 2031, there will be a growth of 12.05% in the import sector, and a growth of 11.65% in



the export sector. In 2041, the import sector will grow by 10% and the export sector will grow by 11%. The current state of the port facilities cannot handle this massive pressure of growing imports and exports. And that is why the capacity of the port is being increased.

Along with adding new equipment to the port, the Chattogram port is also constructing a bay-terminal which covers 907 acres of land in the coastal areas of Patenga. Construction work on the terminal will be complete by June of 2021. Ships which have a draft of over 9 and a half metres and are larger than 190 metres can dock here. Mother vessels with the capacity of 5 thousand TEU can also drop anchor here. Construction has also started on a deep sea port at Matarbari and it will become functional in 2025. Work is also being done to expand the infrastructure of the ports at Mongla and Payra. Aside from this, one of our priorities is obviously the Bay terminal. Overall, I believe we are on the right track to face the challenges of the coming days.

The government has undertaken many port-led developmental projects such as increasing port capacity, and also constructing deep sea ports. What is the ultimate goal of these projects?

Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stated that by 2041, we expect to be a developed nation. On our way to become a developed country, we want to see the Chattogram port as a sub-regional transshipment hub. I always say that if Bangladesh is declared as a sub-regional hub, we can transform our liabilities into assets.

Now, the question is which ports will use our ports as sub-regional transshipment hubs and why? Once the deep sea port at Matarbari becomes operational, the Chattogram, Mongla, and Payra ports will use it as a feeder port. Some of India's ports on the Bay of Bengal belt, such as Kolkata's (currently the Shyamaprasad Mukhapadhy port), Haldia's, Visakhapatnam's, Kakinada's, and Andaman and Nicobar's will be able to use this port. Additionally, some of Myanmar's ports such as Akiyab, Yangon, Phuket in Thailand, and some other small ports will also be able to use it. Thus, these ports will be Matarbari-centric. Now, it can be questioned why will they use Matarbari? Because compared to the ports in that area, Matarbari has the largest draft. Thanks to the 18 metre draft, ships with a 10,000 TEUs can dock here.

Currently, we use Singapore as the transshipment hub. In fact, Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar all use Singapore as the transshipment hub. We import goods



from Colombo and Tanjung Pelepas. Every ship coming from these ports bring in 1,200 to 1,800 TEU containers. Instead of this, if we can bring in 10,000 TEU containers, it will reduce the freight by 40% to 50%. For this reason, Bangladeshi business sector will naturally choose the Matarbari port. In addition to cutting back on costs, they will also receive their goods faster. This means we can hope that this port will become the service port of the transshipment hub. As a result, if we can put in place the grand plans that our honourable prime minister has for our Blue Economy and maritime sector, we will undoubtedly achieve our goal of joining the developed world by 2041. It will transform from a pipe dream into a reality.

There exists a tried and tested model known as the landlord port model, in which the private sector plays a major role in the management of port activities alongside the established authority. Around the world this model has given us examples of success. What plans do the authorities have to inspire the private sector to take part in the development of the port sector?

In the landlord port model, the private sector is responsible for managing the main port facilities. They acquire, use, and preserve the superstructures they consider necessary, such as cargo handling equipment at the terminal. To handle the ever increasing demands of imports and exports, the Bangladeshi government is also seriously considering implementing the landlord port model. In the interest of increasing efficiency,

India's government recently made a similar decision and handed the responsibility of managing 11 of their 12 ports to the private sector. Recently, in one of their reports, the World Bank also expressed their support for this idea and said that Bangladesh and her south Asian neighbours can achieve great success by increasing the involvement of the private sector, both in the present and in the near future.

In the seventh 5 year plan, drawing in investments from the private sector towards the growth of the port sector, and utilising the resources of the Bay of Bengal was discussed. In the eighth 5 year plan, this was reiterated. In this case, do you think private sector investment in certain ports will be comparatively profitable? Also, what are your plans on achieving the goals mentioned in the seventh 5 year plan? And what about the ones mentioned in the eighth 5 year plan?

Firstly, there's a chance of investing greatly in the infrastructure sector. Just as it is important to expand port infrastructure to speed up imports and exports, it is also equally important to grow its capabilities, such as increasing the port's efficiency by adding more automation, keeping up with the rest of the world by making the ports more environment friendly, etc. Our primary responsibility is to ensure that freight movement is as smooth as possible. Naturally, private investment into these sectors will be beneficial. The government will provide policy formulation as well as other necessary assistance. In reality, there

are numerous opportunities for private investment in all sectors.

There's also a decent possibility that the transportation and logistics industries will become more efficient and faster. In this case, adopting a joint approach with an experienced company can be a great option. The road and rail freight transport companies can build up a partnership with the internal shipping lines to conduct business with multinational companies. If it is possible to start a new type of barge-service between Dhaka and Chattogram, this will reduce the pressure of transporting cargo by truck on the roads. Therefore, the logistics situation will improve if the waterways are used more often. At the current moment, we are at a turning point of economic progress. It is essential for us to ensure the uninterrupted development of port, road, rail, and inland water transport sectors. Bangladesh is on the path to becoming the future "Asian Tiger". And our private sectors are prepared to invest to help Bangladesh on this journey. We are specifically thinking of increasing competition between the organisations which provide customs, infrastructure, and logistics services and developing the container tracking and tracing sectors.

The government has given recognition to the success which has been achieved by the Chattogram port in meeting the goals outlined in the seventh 5-year plan. The assessment of the seventh 5-year plan stated that the Chattogram port has achieved all their goals. In some cases, it has even surpassed its goals. The eighth 5-year plan places great importance on increasing the efficiency of ports to accelerate the competitiveness of our economy. I am hopeful that under the skilled guidance of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we shall be able to accomplish this.

A port itself is a logistic platform, which requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders to function smoothly. How are you going to establish this highly important cooperation between the port and its stakeholders?

A port can only thrive when each of its related stakeholders are being fully cooperative and carrying out their responsibilities. This matter is similar to a relay race. You can only start your race once the other person has finished theirs and passes the baton onto you. Without the focus, concerted effort, and wholehearted participation necessary to achieve the objectives, success is impossible. Following specific directions from our honourable prime minister, activities to keep the port running 24/7 have been strengthened. If we want to keep the this very important

port running like clockwork, it is absolutely mandatory for each and every stakeholder to participate. We have not yet been able to take up the practice of keeping public and private offices open during holidays. Congestion at the ports is increasing because importers aren't taking their container deliveries on time. To overcome these weaknesses, the decision has been made to keep important offices such as quality control organisations, nuclear energy commission, and the quarantine department open for 24 hours. To make this successful, there has to be greater cooperation between port authority, the customs office, BSTI, the quarantine department, banks and other partners. To be successful, our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given directions to carry out the work in three shifts. As one of the important stakeholder, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has already sent out 94 of their assistant revenue workers and 9 assistant commissioners to Chattogram. Similar forward mobility has been observed among other stakeholders, too. Alongside this, the port authority has mid-term and long-term plans to increase the skills of the port workers and speed up other port activities. All stakeholders including customs house, C&F agents, and freight forwarders will have to work in three shifts for 24 hours.

In most of the ports in developed countries, the formalities surrounding customs are carried out beyond the periphery of the ports, but it is different in the case of the Chattogram port. The port's regular speed has been

impeded due to the customs delivery and examination being carried out inside the port. What plans do you have to improve this situation?

The government is focused on constructing off-dock facilities to ensure quick unstuffing of Full Container Load (FCL) cargo from the port region and also to ensure faster deliveries. These can be private Container Freight Stations (CFS) or Inland Container Depot (ICD). Currently, there are 17 private ICDs near the Chattogram port. Aside from customs formalities, these installations are used to store low-risk import goods and empty containers. They can provide unstuffing and delivery of 37 goods. There is a talk of building 12-13 more private ICDs to reduce the pressure on the Chattogram port. The government will soon approve of constructing more ICDs and Inland Container Terminals (ICTs) to lessen congestion at the ports. Dhaka and its surrounding ICTs are working to deliver goods via the waterway from Dhaka to Chattogram. The government is sincerely committed towards reducing pressure on the Chattogram port supply chain. I am sure that in the coming days, our combined efforts will result in fall in the costs of conducting business.

You carried out duties at the Mongla port before you were appointed as the chairman of the Chattogram port. In recent times we have seen plenty of activities at the Mongla port. What is the reason behind this interest of port users?

I became the chairman of the Mongla Port Authority in the midst of the COVID-19





pandemic. I am very grateful to our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that she had faith in me and gave me the important responsibility of overseeing the Mongla port during a period of disaster. I have tried my best to pay my due respects towards her faith in me. I have been able to utilise the experience I had as a member of the Chattogram port (Harbour) at the Mongla port.

As you know, for a long time the Mongla port has been a losing concern. It was a great challenge for me to bring back to life a 70-year-old port which has been inactive for a long time. After accepting the responsibilities, I saw that ships weren't coming to the port. When I looked into the matter, the first problem I discovered was a navigability crisis. The port's management was also quite weak. It turned out that the appraising, delivery, and examination were all being done at the same place. This was lowering the productivity of the port. After recognising these issues, I set out to manage the Mongla port in the manner of an international port. Separate yards were created for appraising, examination, delivery, export and stuffing-unstuffing. The port's operations became more organised as a result, and the port's productivity improved.

I also completed the capital dredging in the outer bar one month before the scheduled deadline. This resulted in increased navigability in the harbour area. By using our website and international networks, we were able to inform everyone that ships which have 9 to 10 metre drafts can enter the port, and also welcomed people to use the Mongla port. We projected the fact

that tariffs are lower at the Mongla port compared to the Chattogram port. Whereas previously only 50 ships visited the port in a month, this culminated in about 130 ships visiting the port in a month.

There was poor navigability around the jetty as well and ships with a higher draft than 7 to 7 and a half metres could not approach the port. So, through maintenance dredging, we dredged the jetty head. Our goal was to bring in ships which have a draft of 8 to 8 and a half metres and we successfully achieved that goal.

The Mongla port authority has discussed the matter of increasing the navigability and efficiency of the port with exporters and importers. Shipping and delivery of goods have been improved greatly by developing the port infrastructure and other renovations. This means goods can be released very fast. To ensure the security of the goods, the port installations are now monitored by CCTV. Brand new container and cargo handling equipment have also been added to the port. The traffic, mechanical, and marine departments of the port have been refurbished. Along with bringing radical changes to the port management, employees and officers of the port are now also held accountable. Port users now feel more comfortable using the Mongla port than they did previously as a result of all of these improvements.

One other thing which should be mentioned here is that the Mongla port is particularly suitable for importing food items and cars. The government has issued a Statutory

Regulatory Order (SRO) to import 40% of food items and cars through the Mongla port. We used this for publicity. We prioritised ships which carry foodstuffs, and we reduced the freight for ships carrying cars. Therefore, the shipping agents and freight forwarders who were disinterested to use the Mongla port, they are now using the port and this has increased the number of ships. The sheds of Mongla port are now filled with cars. These cars have also raised the revenue of Mongla port.

Work is currently underway on dredging the inner bar of the port. Once this is completed, ships with drafts of 9-10 metres can dock at the jetty. The Padma bridge will improve connectivity between the Mongla port, Dhaka, and North Bengal once it is operational. And goods-carrying transport can reach Nepal, Bhutan, and other neighbouring countries using the bridge. But the challenge here is to maintain the navigability of the port which we have created. This is why regular maintenance dredging is necessary.

You have worked with this new front of the economy as a Blue Economy cell member of the ministry of power, energy, and mineral resources. You also got the chance to work with this sector when you were the director of the Naval Headquarters. Say a few words on the prospects of Bangladesh in the Blue Economy and how we can utilise that.

The issue of 118, 813 square kilometres of disputed land with Myanmar in 2012 and with India in 2014 was resolved thanks to our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's foresight and competent leadership. This established the sovereignty of Bangladesh at the Bay of Bengal. Through this, fishing at sea, collecting minerals and fossil fuels, shipping, and marine tourism-centric economic possibilities have reached a new horizon. We have to acquire this priceless treasure through proper research and utilising skilled human resources. Work has already started on this. Work is also being done to look for oil and gas in the deep sea. The shipping industry has also been revived. Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC), along with private entrepreneurs, have come forward with large investments. The government's policy support has played a special role in importing ships. If the fleet of sea-going ships is strong enough then we will be able to save a significant amount of rental costs. These savings will further strengthen our economy.

Sincere thanks to you for giving CPA News your time.

I'd like to thank CPA News as well.



Bangabandhu

The supreme visionary of Maritime Bangladesh

CPA News desk

Painting by Alokesh Ghosh, Courtesy: BSMRMU

Since centuries, the Maritime Bengal carries the legacy of creativity, wisdom and prosperity and has been a prominent centre of maritime expertise and craftsmanship. Bengali sailors have sailed into the high seas of near and distant waters to facilitate trade and cross-cultural contact. This has made Bengal a popular destination for foreign traders. The wooden ships designed in Bengal have been widely praised for their design, speed, durability and purposefulness. After meeting local requirements, these ships were also exported, in particular, for the use of international trade and for the war against maritime battles by European countries. However, this tradition of seafaring and shipbuilding was long forgotten until shortly after our independence, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took over the helm of our nation.

Bangabandhu committed himself to the new mission of building a 'Sonar Bangla' for the war-torn nation. In line, to defend the rights over our maritime zone, he took

to the restructuring of the state for the maintenance of our sea resources and ensure economic emancipation. He, in fact, felt the need of a strong naval force much earlier to the independence and demanded the establishing of a naval headquarters in the erstwhile East Pakistan in his 'Six Point Charter,' a manifestation of his far-sighted vision.

Born and raised in riverine Bangladesh, Bangabandhu was very involved in improving the lives of the riverine and coastal population. The three major rivers, the trio of Padma-Meghna-Jamuna, were tremendously related to the strategy, slogan and manifesto of the long Bangladeshi independence movement led by Bangabandhu. He warned in the historic speech of 7 March 1971, "We will defeat them in the water," which was an implicit military tactic in the liberation war using our vast river system. The courageous freedom fighters and naval commandos began assaulting the occupying forces one after another in the ports, harbours

and rivers during the monsoon season, when the rivers of the country were flooded with heavy rain, seemed like executing Bangabandhu's plan and tactical art. The trajectory of the war leading to our final victory was certainly accelerated by this war on the waterfront.

When Bangabandhu started to govern the war-torn Bangladesh, in every field of our region, he launched major programmes of revival and reconstruction. He dreamt of a Sonar Bangla where the constructive interest of people was welcomed. In order to build our new-born nation, he attached great importance to the communication field. Under his supervision, our river communication system was restored, especially the inland water route, which also helped farm irrigation.

Bangabandhu took the visiting Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on a river cruise by a Bangladesh Inland Water Transportation Company (BIWTC) steamer on 19 March 1972 to present the exquisite and riverine Bangladesh, where they spent six hours in

the Shitalakkha and Meghna rivers. Josip Broz Tito, the then President of Yugoslavia, made an official visit to Bangladesh from 29 January to 2 February 1974, when Bangabandhu also took him on a river cruise. That reflects how much passion and devotion for the lovely riverine Bangladesh was rooted in his heart and mind.

It is worth noting that the Mongla-Ghashiakhali waterway was also opened under Bangabandhu's directives in 1974. The primary aim was to identify alternate routes to the Mongla seaport for short-range transportation, keeping the Sundarbans away from environmental pollution. Bangabandhu was the saviour of our rivers, wetlands, and Sundarbans mangrove forest. He built and modernised BIWTC immediately after our independence by implementing numerous ferry, passenger ships, inland container ships and other riverine services within the region, predicting the importance of the inland transport of goods and people.

He took no time to recognise, as a visionary leader, that this country's stability and economic growth is rooted in its maritime potential. Thus, right after independence, with the assistance of the Soviet

Bangabandhu built and modernised BIWTC immediately after our independence by implementing numerous ferry, passenger ships, inland container ships and other riverine services within the region, predicting the importance of the inland transport of goods and people.



Josip Broz Tito, the then President of Yugoslavia, made an official visit to Bangladesh and Bangabandhu took him on a river cruise.

Union's Navy, Bangabandhu took the initiative to clear off wartime mines, wreckages and sunken vessels from the port of Chattogram to resumed port operations. In order to supervise the reconstruction works and economic activities, he also rushed himself to the various important sea and river ports such as Chattogram, Mongla, Barishal and Hiron Point. It was insufficient to dredge the vast inland waterways and river routes to implement his vision of reviving the entire river system with the only dredger called 'Khanak' left with the floundering Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA). Given the need, Bangabandhu has collected seven BIWTA dredgers from abroad, mostly from the Netherlands, which are still active in service. The enormous significance of the seaborne trade that drives the economy of the country was well understood by Bangabandhu. Thus, on 5 February 1972, the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) was established.

Two seagoing vessels named 'Banglar Doot' and 'Banglar Shompod' were incorporated to BSC soon after its establishment, followed by another 12 seagoing vessels obtained from friendly countries such as India, the former Soviet Union and others. He also intended to boost the capability of BSC, which eventually culminated in

the purchase of a total of 38 vessels over the next decade. He recognised the significance of getting our own ocean-going fleet and trained seafarers. Therefore, he re-launched the defunct Marine Academy in Juldia and authorised the 'Marine Academy Development Project' in order to ensure its solidity. In 1973, he also set up the Marine Fisheries Academy with the aid of the Soviet Union, inducted a large number of fishing trawlers, created a fishing port and founded the Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC) in Chattogram.

He launched the building of five patrol craft at Narayanganj Dockyard and a 1,000-ton ocean-going ship at Khulna Shipyard to boost the shipbuilding industry, setting the stage for its potential achievement. To establish maritime safety, he got two Indian gunboats and two former Yugoslav patrol boats, which gave birth to a self-sustaining Bangladesh Navy. He commissioned BNS ISSA KHAN in Chattogram on 10 December 1974. On the same day, he also commissioned naval bases in Dhaka and Khulna and handed over 'Naval Ceremonial Ensign' to Bangladesh Navy. He also initiated the process for purchasing frigates from the Royal Navy and helped BN to stand on its feet with a beautifully located Naval Headquarters in Banani, Dhaka.

An artist's illustration of Bangabandhu on a boat



To promote bilateral trade through inland waterways, the India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed in 1972, which vestiges as a cornerstone of international cooperation and friendship. With a mutual resolution between Bangladesh and India, the India-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission was established on 19 March 1972. The Commission's report led to work together and communicate in 1975, 1978 and 1996 on the water distribution from the Ganges. With the help of Dutch specialists, Bangabandhu instructed that a comprehensive survey of our river system would be undertaken. At that time, BIWTA issued the very first inland waterway charts and formally handed it over to Bangabandhu. In exploring the prospect of oil, gas and mineral resources in the Bay of Bengal, Bangabandhu also enabled the implementation of the first geological survey of Bangladesh. He had the foresight to see the maritime treasures locked in the Bay of Bengal's unfathomed blue waters. The Father of the Nation was the driving force of the 'Bangladesh Petroleum Act 1974' to encourage the geological survey of Bangladesh to explore marine resources. Six international oil companies performed 32,000 line-km surveys under this Petroleum Act and conducted 7 separate drillings



India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed in 1972 between Bangabandhu and then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi.

in our marine region beginning in 1974. He also conceived a future maritime Bangladesh as a great visionary leader and promulgated 'The Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act, 1974,' which was a breakthrough in the maritime history of Bangladesh. The law was crafted at a time when international maritime law, which was universally acknowledged, had yet to take its final form. The United Nations (UN) framed "The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-III)" in 1982, almost eight years after

the enactment of the law by Bangabandhu. The Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act, 1974, laid the framework for the administration of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's outstanding Blue Economy policies.

Bangabandhu made all his efforts to rebuild Bangladesh and laid a strong foundation for being self-reliant and establishing our country on the global map in every field of development, governance and education. He instilled "the spirit of Phoenix" among the Bengali nation to come out of the ravages of war and never give up. In the maritime sector, he also had a discerning sense on developing knowledgeable and qualified human resources fit to explore, exploit and safeguard ocean resources, in addition to building the necessary maritime infrastructure for the country.

Bangabandhu also initiated the process for purchasing frigates from the Royal Navy and helped BN to stand on its feet with a beautifully located Naval Headquarters in Banani, Dhaka.

This article took the historical references from an article of Vice-Chancellor Rear Admiral M Khaled Iqbal (retd). It was published in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University's 'Sailing for Bangabandhu's Maritime Bangladesh' journal.

Bangabandhu, the architect of our maritime vision, onboard a Bangladesh Navy Patrol Craft at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port





➤ Bangabandhu's birthday celebration at Chattogram port



The Chattogram Port Authority celebrated the 101st birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and also National Children's Day. On the occasion of the day, on the morning of 17 March, the chairman and members of the Chattogram Port Authority laid wreaths at a portraiture of the father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the premises of the port building, released pigeons, and cut a cake. At this time, all the departmental heads of the port, including the officers and employees of all levels and the CBA president, general secretary and other leaders were present.

Later, a discussion meeting on Bangabandhu's glorious life and work was organised at the Shaheed Fazlur Rahman Munshi Auditorium. A prize giving ceremony on essays and art based on the topic "Bangabandhu and Bangladesh" was arranged, and this was followed by a cultural programme. Chairman of the Chattogram Port Authority Rear Admiral M Shahjahan was the chief guest and distributed prizes among the winners. A documentary on Bangabandhu's glorious life and career was also screened.

On the occasion of Bangabandhu's birthday, special prayers were offered in all the mosques, places of worship, temples, and Buddhist monasteries operating in the port while special food was distributed to the patients at the port hospital. Apart from this, a cricket match was organised at the Chattogram Port Sports Complex for young students. Commodore Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, a member of the port council, distributed prizes among the winners.

In addition, the port and important installations around the port were illuminated from the evening of 16 March to 17 March.

➤ Meghna group launches two new bulk carriers

Two ultramax dry bulk carriers have been launched by the Meghna Group. Two more ships are carrying the red-green flags at sea. These new ships were inaugurated in the Bay of Bengal on 10 March, the month of the golden jubilee of independence.

The two large ships are the MV Meghna Princess and the MV Meghna Adventure. Each ship is about 200 metres long and capable of carrying 62 thousand tons of goods. The Meghna Group invested USD 46 million or about BDT 391 crore on the new two ships. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) has also invested in this. The two ships have employed 42 Bangladeshi sailors. As they are new, the two ships will be able to carry goods to any port in the world. The inaugural ceremony was held at the MV Meghna Princess, anchored at the outer anchorage area of Chattogram port.

During the programme, Shipping Deputy Minister Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury said, "Two ships will go from one port of the world to another, flying the flag of Bangladesh. Not only business, these two ships will work as ambassadors of Bangladesh in the ports around the world. People will get to know of Bangladesh. This is a matter of pride for us."

"Entrepreneurs have come forward in the ship operational sector," he said. We want to see 500 ships in our fleet in the next 5-10 years. Steps have been taken to overcome the limitations that still exist in this sector. The Prime Minister has opened the door to investments."

Rear Admiral M. Shahjahan, chairman of the Chattogram Port Authority, said, "Shipping is the main sector of the sea economy. The Meghna Group has taken a bold step by investing in the shipping sector. Others will follow Meghna and come forward to invest in this sector." he said.

Mostafa Kamal, chairman of the Meghna Group, said, "During the global recession due to COVID-19, the Prime Minister has encouraged entrepreneurs to take opportunities to invest. Meghna has taken that opportunity. In addition to these two new ships, four more ships will be added next year. The building costs of these ships have decreased by 10%."

With the new ships of Meghna, the number of sea-going ships in Bangladesh has now increased to 63.



▶▶ Ship docked at a private jetty for the first time



On 30 March, for the first time, cargo ships arrived at Chattogram port at the jetty of Karnaphuli Dry Dock Ltd., a ship repair company in Chattogram. After docking at the jetty,

pieces of old iron rods were unloaded from the ships. This is the first step taken by Chattogram port to reduce the waiting time of ships carrying imported goods to private jetties.

On the south bank of the river Karnaphuli, there are two jetties at the Karnaphuli Dry Dock in Anwara. One is under construction and construction of the other one has been completed this month. As soon as construction was completed, a ship under the name 'MV Dina Ocean' was docked there for the first time. The 154-metre-long ship came from Japan with 15,221 tons of pieces of old iron.

M. A. Rashid, managing director at Karnaphuli Dry Dock Ltd., said, "The jetty under construction will be completed this month. Then two ships can be sailed together. This way 10-12 ships can dock at the jetty in a month. The jetty is being upgraded to allow a 170-metre-long vessels to dock there."

As the import of goods through the Chattogram port continues to increase, the queue of ships has also been increasing for several months. Because of this, Chattogram Port Authority has taken an initiative make all the jetties of private and public organisations on both sides of the river Karnaphuli usable. As the first step of this initiative, a ship was docked at this jetty.

The ship, which docked at a private jetty, was carrying raw materials for the BSRM Group, a steel company.

▶▶ Four more ports of Bangladesh and India are being added to the port of call

Negotiations are underway to add four more sea ports to India and Bangladesh to strengthen bilateral coastal trade. The proposed ports are Matarbari and Muktarpur ports (Munshiganj) in Bangladesh, Orissa and Kamarajar ports (Chennai) in India. At present, under the bilateral coastal shipping agreement, Chattogram, Mongla, Khulna, Payra, Narayanganj, Pangaon and Ashuganj ports in Bangladesh are directly connected by sea to the Chennai, Krishnapatnam, Kakinara, Vishakhapatnam, Paradeep, Haldia, and Kolkata ports in India. According to senior officials at the Ministry of Shipping, Bangladesh and India are now working on amending the Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) of the shipping agreement. After the amendment, the addition of four new ports to the port of call will officially be announced.

▶▶ Road and shipping sectors contribute 8% to GDP

The contribution of road and shipping sectors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 8.0% or BDT 1 lac 87 thousand 500 crore. Separately, the contribution of the road transport sector is BDT 1 lac 73 thousand 400 crore, and the contribution of the shipping sector is BDT 14 thousand 100 crore.

On 15 February, at the auditorium of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), there was an inauguration programme for a survey report conducted in 2019 on private, commercial mechanised and non-mechanised road and water transports. The survey was conducted by BBS under the 'Modernisation of National Accounts Statistics' project. The project director Tofayel Ahmed presented the survey at the event.

Secretary of Statistics and Information Management Department Mohammad Yamin Chowdhury was the chief guest at the programme, and the special guest was the Chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Nur Mohammad Majumder. BBS Director General Tajul Islam presided over the function.

▶▶ GSP for Bangladesh till 2027: UK



Robert Chatterton Dickson, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom, hosted a briefing on the first ever trade and commerce conference between the two countries on 16 February. During

that conference he said, Bangladesh would have a preferential market facility in the United Kingdom till 2027, even if it became a middle income country. Bangladeshi products will get Generalised System of Preferences or GSP in the United Kingdom in two steps for three years each.

Robert Dickson said, "Business opportunities in Bangladesh are increasing for companies based in the United Kingdom, especially in the high-quality service sector. Duty and quota-free facilities are being provided as part of cooperation in the field of export-oriented economic development in Bangladesh. Even if Bangladesh becomes a middle income country, it will get GSP privileges in two steps for three years. In the first phase, GSP will be available till 2024 and in the second phase till 2027.

He added, "In order to attract the attention of foreign investors, it is important to address bureaucratic complexities, procedural uncertainties, implementing agreement clauses, and eliminating corruption as well as tax issues."



▶ Blue Economy has the potential to contribute 4% of GDP



Blue Economy – if utilised properly – has the potential to contribute around 4% of Bangladesh's GDP by playing an important role in the country's economic growth in terms of poverty alleviation, ensuring food and nutrition security, and combating the impacts of climate change.

Twenty-six maritime economic functions, including fishing, maritime trade and shipping, energy generation, tourism, mineral extraction, coastal protection and maritime safety will be integral for the development of the blue economy in Bangladesh.

The Blue Economy offers opportunities for a sustainable, clean and equitable blue growth in traditional and emerging local sectors, Rear Admiral Md. Khurshed Alam (Retd), secretary at the Maritime Affairs Unit under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said at a seminar on 7 February 2021.

Presenting the keynote at the seminar titled "Bangabandhu's Vision and Blue Economy" organised by the shipping ministry, Rear Admiral Md. Khurshed Alam (ret'd) said, "Fisheries, aquaculture and mariculture will contribute towards food security and nutrition, as well as employment of millions of people.

Speaking as the chief guest, International Affairs adviser to the Prime Minister Gowher Rizvi said, "The Blue Economy, which offers bountiful resources, has significant value and it is an enormous area of opportunity for Bangladesh.

Gowher Rizvi also emphasised the need for well-trained, skilled and educated human resources – who are the driving force for a dynamic and sustainable development of an economy. "To achieve our Target 2041, we have to start working right now," he concluded.

At the event, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury said, "We got 1.19 lakh square kilometres in the Bay of Bengal, and using this resource, we will eradicate poverty in Bangladesh by ensuring plenty of food and employment." The shipping ministry is making a serious effort to build the infrastructure strong to cater the process, he added.

▶ Container handling is on the rise at Chattogram port

Container handling has been on the rise since the beginning of this year as the COVID-19 situation improved somewhat. In January, 243,000 containers were handled in the port, the highest in the last year. However, the growth in container handling is not yet what it used to be before the pandemic.

According to port information, 123,000 containers with imported goods and 120,000 containers carrying export goods including empty containers were transported to the port last January. More containers were transported in January 2020 than in the last 13 months. In that month, 266,000 TUE containers were transported.

Only 25% of the goods imported and exported through Chattogram port are brought in containers and the rest in cargoes (in bulk).

▶ Qatar Petroleum will supply LNG to Bangladesh

Bangladesh is set to become one of the largest LNG importers in Asia, like India and Pakistan, due to the depletion of domestic gas supply in Bangladesh. Qatar Petroleum has recently signed a long-term agreement with Vitol, the Dutch company responsible for constructing the world's largest deep-sea Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) terminal. Under the agreement, Qatar Petroleum will supply 1,250,000 tons of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) annually to customers of Vitol in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh currently has two floating terminals and a Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU), which has the capacity to produce 28,000,000 cubic metres of gas daily and about 7,500,000 tons of gas per year.

▶ Patenga Container Terminal will be operated on PPP

The government has given policy approval for the operation and maintenance of the Patenga Container Terminal of Chattogram port to be carried out under Public-Private Partnership (PPP). This approval was given at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on financial matters on 3 March. There is a potential to invest USD 58 million on the project.

Chattogram port is the country's largest and busiest port. The port plays an important role in the economic growth of the country. The container terminal currently under construction at Patenga will increase the capacity of the port and increase the logistics efficiency of the port.

The project titled 'Equip, Operate and Maintenance of Patenga Container Terminal' is under the Ministry of Shipping. According to the pre-survey, the potential investment the project is estimated to receive is USD 58 million and the annual operating cost is USD 8 million.

Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping Mohammad Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury presented various aspects of the project at a meeting and proposed that approval be given to implement the project under PPP.

It was presented at the meeting that similar PPP projects have been successfully implemented in different parts of the world including China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Many foreign investors have contacted the PPP authority and expressed their interests regarding this project.

At present, seven PPP projects under the Ministry of Shipping are in various stages of implementation.

▶▶ 44 years in container handling at Chattogram port



On 22 March 2021, Chattogram port completed 44 years since it started the handling of goods in containers. This programme was started on the same day in 1977

by importing goods in six containers on the ship 'SS Tenacity' at Chattogram port.

At present, 28 lac containers are being transported through Chattogram port every year. The economic progress of a country can be measured by the number of container handling. Because, just as valuable export goods are transported in containers, industrial raw materials, machinery, and other commercial products are also imported in them.

The main purpose of introducing transport of goods in containers was to take the raw materials directly from the port to the factory or warehouse and then to ship final products to the port easily.

▶▶ ADB to invest in Dhirashram Inland Container Depot

An Inland Container Depot (ICD) is being set up at Dhirashram in Gazipur to cut the uncertainty in investments, where containers will be brought directly from Chattogram port by rail. One of the three projects that has been put on the government's priority list to speed up the port is the ICD at Dhirashram. The implementation of this project has been prioritised in the recent meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office. It was informed at that meeting that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will invest in this important project. Confirming the matter, Additional Director General (Infrastructure) of Railways Dhirandranath Majumder said, "Although the plan was approved a long time ago, the project could not be implemented because there weren't any investors. Now we have found investors. The ADB has also agreed to invest in the project. The Prime Minister's Office is prioritising the implementation of the project."

If the ICD is built at Dhirashram, trains carrying containers will be able to travel without entering the capital. If transit with India, Nepal, and Bhutan starts, the containers brought from those countries can be kept at this ICD. Besides, after the construction of Padma Bridge is complete, container trains will be able to operate on the Dhaka-Mongla route. There will be no need to enter Dhaka to transport containers from Chattogram or Mongla to the north. The ICD at Dhirashram will be an important container depot for the country and in international trade.

▶▶ New route opened for transporting goods by sea to Bangladesh

Construction of the first deep seaport of the country has started in Matarbari, and it will become operational in 2025. Already ships have started to arrive at the jetty built for the coal power plant beside the seaport. The ship 'Venus Triumph' carrying building materials, docked at this jetty for the first time on 29 December. Then on 8 January, the second cargo ship SPM Bangkok docked at the jetty. The ship is embarking on a new route for shipping goods by sea in the country.

The ship is carrying goods from Malaysia's 'Port Kelang' to the Matarbari Coal Power Plant jetty in Maheshkhali. Half of the goods was unloaded there and on 13 January it docked at the Chattogram port's jetty with the remaining goods. The SPM Bangkok ship is not a regular cargo service on this route, rather the ship only carries building materials for coal-fired power plants. Meanwhile, the ship has set a record for being the first ship to transport goods on the Kelang-Matarbari-Chattogram port route. At the same time, it opened new doors for the transportation of goods on this route.



▶▶ Turkey is interested in investing in Bangladesh

Mustafa Osman Turan, Turkey's ambassador to Bangladesh, said that due to the attractive facilities, the investors in Turkey are now interested to invest in the economic zones of Bangladesh. "Apart from increasing investments in Bangladesh, Turkey also wants to increase the volume of bilateral trade through diversification of trading goods," he said.

He made these remarks at a meeting with the senior employees at the Gulshan branch of EBL on 20 January. The ambassador said, "Turkey is looking for ways to cooperate with Bangladesh in the fields of pharmaceutical manufacturing, IT, agriculture, light engineering, hospitality sector, tourism and health sectors." A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on bilateral cooperation between the FBCCI and the Foreign Economic Relations Board in Turkey is going to be signed soon.



CPA NEWS

A Quarterly Publication of
Chittagong Port Authority

