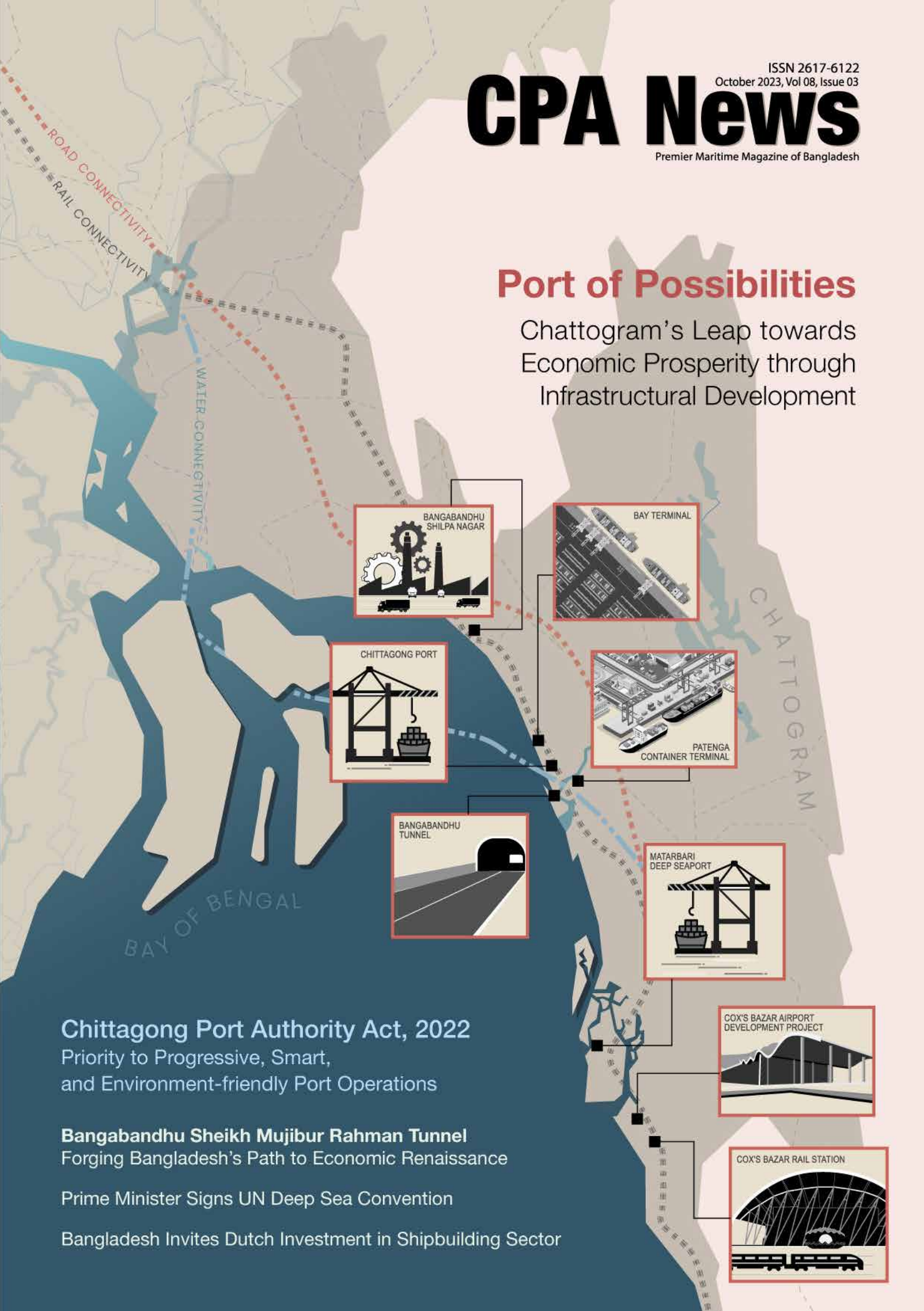


Port of Possibilities

Chattogram's Leap towards Economic Prosperity through Infrastructural Development



Chittagong Port Authority Act, 2022

Priority to Progressive, Smart, and Environment-friendly Port Operations

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel

Forging Bangladesh's Path to Economic Renaissance

Prime Minister Signs UN Deep Sea Convention

Bangladesh Invites Dutch Investment in Shipbuilding Sector

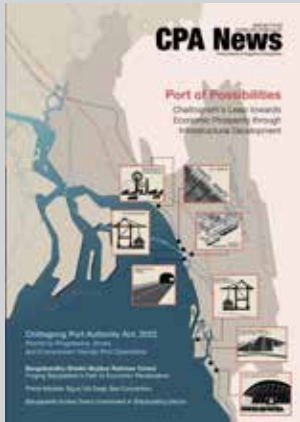


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Editorial

Chattogram's Path to Transformation

As we set sail into the seventh year with the October 2023 edition of CPA News, a publication that embarked on its journey six years ago, we take pride in being a beacon of knowledge and insight for our readers. Our publication has served as an invaluable source, catering to the interests of readers worldwide, from the global port community to key stakeholders, all seeking to remain well-informed about the maritime sector of Bangladesh.

With this edition, we are delighted to bring to you a collection of enlightening articles and the latest maritime news. Our focus remains firmly on the maritime industry, with a special emphasis on the vibrant and ever-evolving Chittagong Port.

The Lead Story discovers how Chattogram region is transforming into an important economic hub of the Bay of Bengal. It also explores how Chattogram's strategic location, and a substantial number of infrastructural projects are set to boost the nation's economy and enhance its geoeconomic importance.

In our Perspective piece, we delve into the recent developments in port governance with the enactment of the 'Chittagong Port Authority Act, 2022'. This forward-looking law sets the stage for progressive, smart, and environmentally friendly port operations. It marks a significant step towards modernising and streamlining the port's activities, ensuring a more efficient and sustainable future.

We also had the privilege to publish an article on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel as a new era of connectivity and economic prosperity dawns upon Bangladesh with the grand inauguration. This engineering marvel, spanning the mighty Karnaphuli River, stands as a testament to the nation's unwavering commitment to progress and modernisation. As Bangladesh embarks on a transformative journey towards a brighter future, the tunnel will serve as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path towards a united, prosperous, and globally connected nation.

To ensure you stay informed of all key maritime events and developments from the 3rd quarter of 2023, be sure to check out our 'News Bytes' section. We are always open to suggestions on how to improve the magazine, so please feel free to share your ideas with us. Thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to continuing to share our maritime knowledge with you.

Wishing you smooth seas and fair winds,

Thank you so much.

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The article investigates the growing significance of the Chattogram Division in Bangladesh's economic development. It highlights that Chittagong Port, which handles over 90% of the country's import-export trade, plays a crucial role. Furthermore, the article discusses the implementation of major infrastructure projects, including the Matarbari Deep Seaport, the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, and the expansion of Cox's Bazar International Airport.



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The inauguration ceremony held on October 28, 2023, was a momentous occasion that represented a leap towards the future. Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the event marked Bangladesh's readiness to embrace advancement. The Prime Minister lauded the tunnel as a project that embodies the spirit of development and national growth. Let's delve into the economic ramifications of the tunnel project.

11 **Chittagong Port Authority Act, 2022: Priority to Progressive, Smart, and Environment-friendly Port Operations**

Perspective



In our Perspective article, we delve into the governance of Chittagong Port with the newly enacted 'Chittagong Port Authority Act, 2022.' Discover how this contemporary law is reshaping the maritime landscape, ensuring efficient, coordinated operations and fulfilling the port's vision for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Port of Possibilities

Chattogram's Leap towards Economic Prosperity through Infrastructural Development

CPA News desk

Chattogram, covering south-easternmost areas of Bangladesh, serves as a crucial economic hub for the nation. Nestled on the banks of the Karnaphuli River and opening into the Bay of Bengal, Chattogram's strategic location has long facilitated trade and commerce, contributing significantly to Bangladesh's economy. Chittagong Port, the busiest international seaport in the country, handles over 90% of Bangladesh's import-export trade, underscoring its pivotal role in the nation's economic landscape.

In recent years, Chattogram has been the focus of numerous infrastructural development projects aimed at bolstering its economic potential and enhancing its strategic importance. These projects, encompassing a wide array of sectors, are set to transform the entire Chattogram Division's infrastructure, thereby boosting its capacity to support the growing demands of Bangladesh's rapidly expanding economy.

From the construction of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel to the development of the Matarbari Deep Seaport, Powerplants, Mirsarai Economic Zone, Bay Terminal, Patenga Container Terminal, and the expansion of Cox's Bazar International Airport, these projects represent a concerted effort to elevate Chattogram's

infrastructural capabilities. Additionally, the development of the Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Rail Link is set to improve connectivity and ease economic growth.

These ambitious projects not only underscore the government's commitment to infrastructural development but also highlight Chattogram's evolving role as a key player in Bangladesh's economic narrative. As these projects come to fruition, they are expected to significantly boost the economy and enhance the capacity of Chattogram Port, paving the way for a prosperous future.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel project, a landmark infrastructural initiative in Chattogram, is set to revolutionise the city's transportation landscape. This ambitious project involves the construction of a long tunnel under the Karnaphuli River, the first of its kind in Bangladesh. The tunnel, which comprises two tubes with two lanes each, is designed to accommodate a wide range of vehicles, thereby significantly enhancing the city and South Chattogram belt's transportation capacity.

The principal conduit stretches an impressive 3.32 kilometres in length,

comprising dual two-lane tubes, each extending 2.45 kilometres. Augmenting this engineering marvel are two auxiliaries of 5.35 kilometre link roads positioned at both the western and eastern ends of the tunnel, coupled with a 727-metre elevated flyover at the Anwara terminus. This infrastructure is poised to significantly enhance regional connectivity. The tunnel's design allows vehicular travel at speeds reaching up to 80 kilometres per hour. Notably, the tunnel is situated at depths varying from 18 to 31 metres beneath the Karnaphuli River, a testament to its intricate engineering.

This ambitious project has garnered support from the governments of Bangladesh and China, with a substantial total investment of BDT 10,689.71 crore. The financing framework includes a contribution of BDT 4,619.70 crore from the Bangladesh government, complemented by a BDT 6,070.01 crore investment from the Exim Bank of China. The prestigious China Communication and Construction Company Limited (CCCC) bears the responsibility for the construction of this monumental tunnel. In alignment with its vision of a 'One City Two Towns' concept, reminiscent of Shanghai's urban layout, the Bangladesh government aims to develop areas on both banks of the Karnaphuli River, fostering urban growth and connectivity.



The impact of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel on Chattogram's transportation and connectivity cannot be overstated. By providing a direct link between the city's southern parts and the northern side, the tunnel is expected to alleviate traffic congestion on existing routes, particularly the heavily trafficked Shah Amanat Bridge. This improved connectivity is likely to stimulate economic activity by facilitating the swift movement of goods and people across the city. It is estimated that more than 28,305 vehicles will travel through the tunnel every day by 2025, which will increase to an average of 37,946 by 2030. The tunnel will increase connectivity between the under-construction Matarbari Deep Sea Port, Bay Terminal of Chittagong Port and Mirsarai Economic Zone. It forms a key part of the Asian Highway Network, a cooperative project among countries in Asia and Europe aimed at improving highway standards across the continent.

The Matarbari Deep Seaport

The Matarbari Deep Seaport project is a significant infrastructural development in Chattogram, poised to transform Bangladesh's maritime trade landscape. This deep-sea port, located in the Matarbari area of Cox's Bazar, is designed to accommodate large vessels that cannot be handled by the existing Chittagong Port. The project includes the construction of a multipurpose terminal, a container terminal, and necessary port infrastructure, making it a state-of-the-art facility. It has been commissioned at an estimated expenditure of BDT 17,777 crore. This significant project is scheduled for completion by December 31, 2026.

The port will be of significant benefit to neighbouring countries, especially the landlocked ones. For instance, India's northeastern states, also known as the seven sisters (Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya,



The Matarbari Deep Seaport is expected to transform Bangladesh into a regional transshipment hub, increasing the country's gross domestic product by 2-3 %, and raising it to middle-income status

Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura), and Nepal and Bhutan will also benefit from the port. These regions will be able to transport goods from Kolkata and Haldia in India by the largest mother vessels which will be able to dock at the seaport's terminals. As a deep-sea port, container ships with larger drafts will be able to dock directly instead of taking feeder ships to/from the bigger regional ports.

Central to this development is the construction of a 460-metre-long container jetty, alongside a 300-metre-long multipurpose jetty. These structures boast an impressive 16-metre draft, accommodating the submerged portion of a ship. The addition of various essential port facilities within the Matarbari Deep Seaport Development Project is a strategic move, designed to facilitate the direct entry of large container ships, ranging from 8,000 to 10,000 TEUs. This advancement is expected to be a pivotal step in bolstering maritime commerce and enhancing the logistical capabilities of the nation.

By facilitating the docking of large vessels, the port will significantly increase the country's cargo handling capacity, thereby boosting import-export activities. This is likely to have a ripple effect on various sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, logistics, and retail, among others.

The Matarbari port is expected to transform Bangladesh into a regional transshipment hub, increasing the country's gross domestic product by 2-3 %, and raising it to middle-income status. It has the potential to impact the socio-economic conditions of the people of neighbouring regions in a big way.

Furthermore, the port is set to have a profound impact on the local economy. The construction and operational phases of the project are generating employment opportunities, stimulating local businesses, and attracting investment to the region. Eventually, the Matarbari Deep Seaport could transform the economic landscape of Chattogram and contribute significantly to Bangladesh's



economic growth. As such, the port stands as a symbol of Chattogram's infrastructural development and its growing importance in the national and regional economic scenario.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar

The Mirsarai Economic Zone, christened Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar, stands on the cusp of dramatically elevating Bangladesh's trade and economic stature. This colossal initiative, sprawling across 30,000 acres, is forecasted to engender job opportunities for an astounding 1.5 million individuals over the next decade and a half, while projecting export revenues of a staggering USD15 billion. The zone has magnetised an impressive USD12 billion in investment propositions from a myriad of both national and international corporations.

This development is underscored by extensive infrastructural enhancements, including coastal fortifications for flood and erosion control, water management sluice gates, enhanced roadway connectivity, advanced power distribution frameworks, and a notable amplification in gas delivery capacity. Further bolstering this is the establishment of an 1800-megawatt power facility to guarantee a stable electricity supply.

A diverse array of prominent local and global companies, encompassing Well Group, Ananta Group, Kunming Iron & Steel Holding Company Limited, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), and Bashundhara Group, have invested in this zone. Their investments span across a vast spectrum of sectors such as textiles, iron and steel production, and garment manufacturing, thereby markedly broadening the region's economic horizons.

By fostering an ecosystem that supports industrial growth, Mirsarai could transform Chattogram into a major industrial hub, not just within Bangladesh, but in the broader South Asian region. As such, the economic zone stands as a testament to Chattogram's potential for economic transformation and its growing importance in Bangladesh's economic narrative.

The Patenga Container Terminal Project

The Patenga Container Terminal project involves the development of a new terminal in the Patenga area, designed to augment the existing port facilities in Chattogram. The terminal will feature ultramodern infrastructure and is expected to significantly enhance the port's cargo handling capacity.

The Patenga Container Terminal, a significant addition to the maritime trade and port management sector of Bangladesh, is

poised to boost the nation's trade and commerce. After a construction period of nearly 17 months, the terminal's operational commencement is imminent. With an annual handling capacity of 450,000 Twenty Foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) containers, the Patenga Container Terminal will notably enhance the ship handling and container holding capacities of Chattogram Port. Its strategic location shortens the river route for ships docking at the terminal by about eight kilometres, providing a notable logistical advantage.

The Red Sea Gateway Terminal (RSGT), a Saudi Arabian firm, is going to sign a contract on 6th December 2023 for the Patenga Container Terminal. The primary objectives of this agreement include modernising and optimising the port's operations to increase its capacity and overall efficiency. This development is part of the Bangladeshi government's broader strategy to attract foreign investment and ability in key economic sectors. The expertise of RSGT in managing ports and maritime logistics is expected to introduce innovative technologies and best practices to Patenga, potentially transforming it into a world-class container terminal.

The Chairman of the Chattogram Port Authority expressed confidence in RSGT's capabilities and the positive impact of this collaboration on Bangladesh's maritime sector. The introduction of state-of-the-art equipment and digital solutions is expected to streamline processes, reduce turnaround times, and ensure smoother cargo handling operations. This enhancement will make the Patenga Container Terminal a major trade hub, attracting more shipping lines and driving economic growth.

The Bay Terminal Project

The Bay Terminal project involves the construction of a new terminal along the Bay of Bengal, designed to accommodate larger vessels that the existing Chittagong Port cannot handle. The terminal will feature state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure, enhancing the port's cargo handling capacity.

The Bay Terminal is expected to have a profound impact on shipping cost. By accommodating larger vessels, the terminal will enable economies of scale in shipping, potentially leading to lower shipping costs. This could translate into benefiting importers and exporters alike.

The Bay Terminal's multipurpose terminal will feature five jetties, and the overall Bay Terminal is set to encompass a total of 11 jetties. Integral to the Bay Terminal's design is its emphasis on multimodal connectivity, a strategic feature aimed at enhancing the efficiency of transport networks while simultaneously alleviating traffic congestion in the adjacent roadways.

A salient feature of the Bay Terminal project is its capacity to berth vessels of larger dimensions compared to those currently serviced by Chittagong Port. At present, the port's limitations restrict access to ships exceeding 10 metres in draft and 200 metres in length. In contrast, the Bay Terminal is designed to accommodate vessels with a draft of up to 12 metres and a length of 260 metres, thereby obviating the need for tidal considerations during berthing. This significant upgrade will markedly bolster the port's cargo handling capabilities, easing a more streamlined and effective flow of trade.

The Patenga Container Terminal, a significant addition to the maritime trade and port management sector of Bangladesh, is poised to boost the nation's trade and commerce





The Bay Terminal will have multimodal connectivity facilities

Furthermore, the concurrent development of the Bay Terminal and the Matarbari Deep Seaport Development Project is expected to elevate Chittagong Port's capacity, potentially by three to fourfold, as stated by the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA). This expansion is imperative to meet the escalating demands for cargo, container, and vessel handling, and it aligns seamlessly with the port's strategic objectives across short, medium, and long-term horizons.

Powerplants in Chattogram

In Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, the Matarbari coal-fired power plant is a significant undertaking slated to start operations soon. Situated in Maheshkhali, this facility will bolster the national grid by 600 MW, marking a major boost in energy capabilities. Funded primarily by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the project covers a 1,414-acre site and includes vital port infrastructure and a coal jetty for efficient coal handling. It will require around 13,104 tons of coal daily, necessitating large storage silos and eco-friendly ash ponds for waste management. The total cost is estimated at BDT51,800 crores.

Simultaneously, Maheshkhali Island is being developed into a major energy hub, set to be fully functional by 2027. This initiative encompasses the construction of power plants and an LNG terminal, along with two power plants, five LNG and LPG terminals, an oil refinery, and a 220-kilometre pipeline. Additionally, the plan includes a 14-kilometre sea canal, two jetties, and various storage facilities. This development is integral to Bangladesh's renewable energy goals, aiming to generate 13,560MW and significantly reduce carbon emissions.

Besides, Chattogram district is witnessing the construction of five new power plants, contributing a combined 716 MW to the power grid. These include a 300-MW plant at Anowara, a 116-MW plant at Sikalbaha, and others at strategic locations. These plants are crucial for alleviating electricity shortages in the greater Chattogram region and supporting its economic growth, particularly for industries dependent on consistent power supply. For example, the Sikalbaha power plant, already providing 150 MW, is expected to add another 75 MW, significantly impacting the area's electricity availability and economic development.

Cox's Bazar Airport Development Project

The Cox's Bazar International Airport Development Project, currently under construction and projected to be completed by May 2024, is poised to significantly enhance Bangladesh's aviation capabilities and economic prospects. This development is part of a broader initiative to transform the southeastern district of Cox's Bazar into a global communications hub, drawing inspiration from cities like Hong Kong and Singapore. The airport, featuring a maritime runway unique in Bangladesh, represents a major investment of USD 185 million and is expected to facilitate the landing of the world's largest planes for refuelling and attracting international tourists.

The strategic location of Cox's Bazar, known for its natural beauty and untapped potential, positions the airport to drive significant socio-economic change in the region. The airport is expected to catalyse the local economy by boosting tourism, fostering business opportunities, and attracting foreign

investments. It aims to shift employment towards the tourism sector, potentially decreasing export costs and enhancing the district's GDP. Additionally, the airport is a central component of the government's mega plan, complementing other key projects in the area, including the Matarbari Deep Seaport, LNG-based power plants, and various tourism and economic zones. The constructive collaboration between the airport and these key projects including Matarbari Deep Seaport will streamline transportation and logistics, amplifying their collective impact on the regional and national economy.

Moreover, the new airport will contribute to local and national development beyond just transportation and logistics. It is expected to revolutionise the tourism industry in Cox's Bazar, aligning with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) goals for sustainable marine tourism. The airport's establishment will create employment opportunities, enhance local community capacities, and promote cultural heritage, contributing significantly to the overall GDP. This development will also position Cox's Bazar as a vital transit route and refuelling hub for international flights, inviting tourists to experience the world's longest sea beach.

The airport is set to create employment opportunities, both during the construction phase and when it becomes operational. This will contribute to local economic growth and development. In the broader context, the Cox's Bazar International Airport project underscores the strategic importance of Chattogram in Bangladesh's economic narrative and its potential to become a major tourist hub in South Asia.

The Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Rail Link

The nearing completion of the Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Rail Link, a significant infrastructure development in Bangladesh, is set to positively impact the nation's trade, commerce, and maritime sector.

The rail line, a mixed-gauge railway extending from Dhaka to Chattogram and further to Cox's Bazar, will facilitate high-speed rail traffic. Besides, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the 100-kilometre Dohazari to Cox's Bazar railway line on 11 November 2023, establishing the first rail link to Bangladesh's southeast coast, Cox's Bazar. This development will gradually enable high-speed trains to travel from Dhaka to Cox's Bazar via Chattogram at speeds of up to 150 kilometres per hour. The railway will significantly enhance tourism in Cox's Bazar, easing the transportation of agricultural products, salt, vegetables, fish, and rubber raw materials produced in the region. Additionally, it will contribute to the



The iconic, state-of-the-art oyster-shaped railway station in Cox's Bazar

socio-economic growth of Cox's Bazar by improving transportation infrastructure for various local commodities, thus reducing transportation costs, and supporting local farmers and fishermen.

The construction of this railway line is a part of the government's broader initiative to enhance rail connectivity across Bangladesh. Alongside air and road networks, this railway will form a comprehensive communication system to Cox's Bazar. Moreover, the construction of an iconic, state-of-the-art oyster-shaped railway station near Cox's Bazar is complete. This station, with various modern amenities, will further boost the region's appeal to tourists, amplifying its potential as a travel destination.

The railway is also expected to play a pivotal role in regional connectivity as part of the Trans-Asia Railway network. This integration will potentially link Bangladesh to the Trans-Asian Railway Corridor with Myanmar and China, enhancing its position in regional trade and commerce.

In terms of its impact on Bangladesh's maritime sector, particularly the Chittagong Port and Matarbari Deep Seaport, the railway will facilitate easier and faster transportation of goods between these ports and Cox's Bazar. This will bolster domestic and foreign investment in these regions and support the ongoing economic development projects in Chattogram.

How These Projects Impact on Chittagong Port's Capacity?

Chittagong Port's role in the economic story of Bangladesh is increasingly prominent, thanks to a series of infrastructure development projects aimed at boosting its capacity. These projects are diverse

and strategically important, encompassing the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, the development of Matarbari Deep Seaport, powerplants, the Mirsarai Economic Zone, Bay Terminal, Patenga Container Terminal, Cox's Bazar International Airport, and the Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Rail Link. Together, they promise a transformative impact on the port's operational capabilities.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, for example, is more than just a passage beneath a river; it is a vital link that will improve the flow of traffic across the city, making the transport of goods to and from the port much more efficient. The Matarbari Deep Seaport, along with the Bay and Patenga Terminal projects, are designed with an eye on the future, ready to accommodate larger vessels and thereby significantly increase the port's capacity for handling cargo. This expansion is not just about size; it is about enhancing the port's ability to play a bigger role in global trade.

Moreover, the Chattogram region is not just expanding its port facilities. By building sustainable and necessary power plants, it is becoming a powerhouse for product manufacturing, adding another layer to its economic significance. The Mirsarai Economic Zone, strategically situated along the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, is poised to attract a range of investments, boosting the volume of cargo that flows through the port.

The expansion of Cox's Bazar International Airport and the establishment of the Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Rail Link will further enhance the accessibility and efficiency of Chittagong Port. This is not just about moving people; it is about creating a seamless network of transportation that feeds into and supports the port's operations, potentially leading to increased cargo volumes.

The economic implications of this increased port capacity are far-reaching. Ports are essential in supporting industries and increasing national competitiveness. They enable trade and support supply chains, providing a cascade of economic benefits. For instance, the enhancement of Chittagong Port's capacity to berth larger vessels will lead to an increase in container handling capacity. This could result in lower shipping and port charges, making international trade more accessible and appealing.

Efficient port infrastructure is a crucial factor in figuring out overall port competitiveness and the costs associated with international trade. The development of high-quality port infrastructure builds the confidence necessary to attract investment in production and distribution systems, supporting the growth of manufacturing and logistics sectors. This, in turn, creates employment opportunities and raises income levels. Inefficient ports can hinder the smooth functioning of container shipping, reducing capacity and inflating costs. Improving container port performance can lower the cost of trade, contribute to food security, improve resilience, and reduce unnecessary emissions from vessels.

Conclusion

The article provided an in-depth analysis of the various infrastructural development projects underway in Chattogram, Bangladesh, and their collective impact on enhancing the capacity of Chittagong Port. These projects, including the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, Matarbari Deep Seaport, Mirsarai Economic Zone, Bay Terminal, the Patenga Container Terminal, Cox's Bazar International Airport, and Dhaka-Cox's Bazar Rail Link, are set to transform Chattogram's infrastructural landscape and boost its economic potential.

Each project was discussed in detail, highlighting its unique contributions to improving connectivity, enhancing port capacity, and stimulating economic growth. The article underscored the strategic importance of these projects in shaping Chattogram's future and its evolving role in Bangladesh's economic narrative.

Looking ahead, these infrastructural developments hold promising prospects for Chattogram and Bangladesh as a whole. The enhanced port capacity is expected to boost trade volumes, reduce shipping costs, and attract investment, thereby driving economic growth. The improved connectivity will ease the movement of goods and people, further stimulating economic activity. ◀



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, marking a new chapter in Bangladesh's infrastructure development

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel Forging Bangladesh's Path to Economic Renaissance

CPA News desk

Bangladesh stands on the cusp of a new era with the inauguration of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, an infrastructural marvel that promises to reshape the nation's economic landscape. This underwater tunnel, the first of its kind in South Asia, is not just a passageway beneath the Karnaphuli River but a catalyst for connectivity and prosperity, stretching its impact from the bustling localities of Chittagong to the strategic trade routes that crisscross the region.

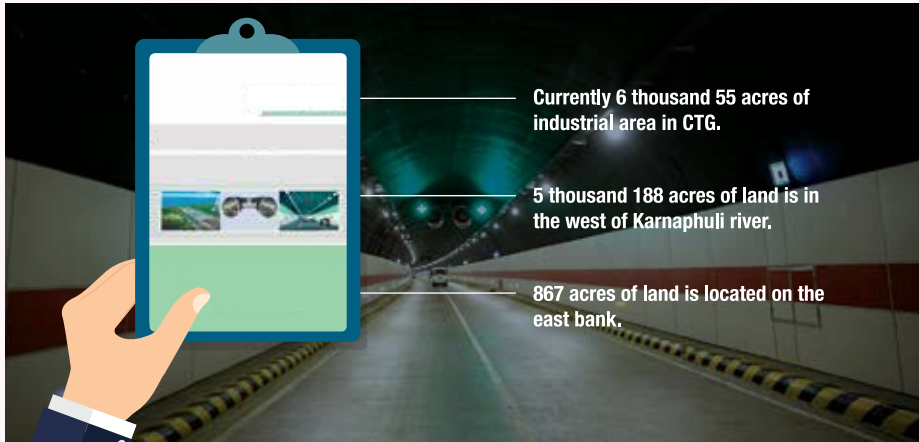
The inauguration ceremony held on October 28, 2023, was a momentous occasion that represented a leap towards the future. Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the event marked Bangladesh's readiness to embrace advancement. The Prime Minister lauded the tunnel as a project that embodies the spirit of development and national growth. The ceremony was imbued with a sense of national pride, as the tunnel stands as a monument to Bangladesh's growth and ambition.

The tunnel is set to transform Chittagong, the commercial heart of Bangladesh, by bridging the city center with the southern parts such as Anwara upazila. By slashing

travel times and easing traffic congestion, the tunnel paves the way for the city's expansion into a dynamic 'one city, two towns' model. With the completion of the tunnel, industrial

The Karnaphuli Tunnel project has been estimated to cost BDT 10,374.82 crore, which is being financed by both the Bangladesh government (BDT 4,461.23 crore) and the EXIM Bank of China (BDT 5,913.19 crore)





With the construction of this tunnel, 5,188 acres of land on the west bank of the Karnaphuli River are now designated for industrial development

development has surged, promising a wealth of investment and job creation. The presence of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and the influx of a variety of companies are set to have significant effects on local employment and property values, heralding a new chapter of prosperity for the region.

Nationally, the tunnel emerges as a cornerstone for Bangladesh's economic aspirations, creating a direct route to the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and enhancing the efficiency of the Chittagong seaport—Bangladesh's primary maritime gateway. The project is projected to make a substantial annual contribution to the nation's GDP, marking a significant boost for an economy on the brink of diversified industrial growth.

The impact of the tunnel extends to regional connectivity. It plays a crucial role in the Asian Highway Network and the Bangladesh-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor, streamlining access to markets in neighboring regions and catalyzing a new era of economic interdependence and growth. Moreover, it solidifies Bangladesh's strategic role as a pivotal transit hub in South Asia.

On a global scale, the tunnel enhances the operational capabilities of the Chittagong Port, which is integral to maritime trade routes. The potential of the tunnel to improve logistics efficiency can reduce shipping costs and times for international trade, benefiting global economies.

The economic implications of the tunnel are profound. The Chittagong region is witnessing a surge in industrial activity, with the establishment of numerous industries around the Karnaphuli River. The development of multiple industrial facilities promises to bring a surge in employment opportunities.

In the realm of tourism, a significant potential revenue stream for Bangladesh, the tunnel is set to deliver a substantial boost. With shortened travel distances and improved accessibility, the tunnel is poised to attract more tourists, bolstering the region's economic revenue and enhancing its allure.

The project has been developed with careful consideration of environmental and social factors. The construction of the tunnel under the river ensures the preservation of the Karnaphuli's ecosystem, which is crucial for local fisheries and biodiversity. By mitigating traffic congestion, the tunnel contributes to lower vehicular emissions, presenting a greener alternative for commuters.

The tunnel is designed to handle an estimated 17 thousand vehicles per day, promising a smoother travel experience within Chattogram and to the broader region, while also diverting traffic from overburdened bridges, easing both intercity and intracity congestion.

Safety features within the tunnel are state-of-the-art, ensuring secure passage for millions. Regular safety checks and adherence to international standards mean that the tunnel is not just a passage but a safeguarded conduit for people and trade.

Supported by substantial investment, the tunnel is a sign of the country's unwavering commitment to its development goals and a model of financial collaboration.

As the Karnaphuli Tunnel opens to traffic, it ushers in the future of Bangladesh, guiding the nation toward an integrated, dynamic economy that is regionally essential and globally relevant. With each vehicle that passes, the tunnel carries the nation's hopes towards a more connected and prosperous future.

The Karnaphuli Tunnel is an infrastructural achievement that serves as a conduit for progress, a channel for opportunities, and a gateway to Bangladesh's economic renaissance. It exemplifies the transformative power of visionary projects and their ability to reshape the socio-economic landscape of a nation. As vehicles begin to ply this modern marvel, the tunnel drives Bangladesh towards a brighter, more interconnected future, symbolizing the nation's progress and heralding a new wave of development and prosperity. ◀

WHAT IT IS SOLVING

ALTERNATIVE FOR KALURGHAT BRIDGE
TUNNEL WILL BE DIRECT ALTERNATIVE TO THIS 100 YEAR OLD BRIDGE

SAVE TIME
AS NO LONGER PEOPLE HAVE TO GO TO KALURGHAT BRIDGE

REDUCE DISTANCE
DISTANCE BETWEEN CHATTOGRAM AND COX'S BAZAR REDUCED 40KM

UNDISTURBED MARITIME TRAFFIC
NAVIGABLE ROUTE REMAINS UNTOUCHED FOR VESSELS

TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS
FROM INDUSTRIES AND MATARBARI PORT ON THE OTHER SIDE

FINANCING
BDT **10,374** CRORE PROJECT COST
5,913 CRORE WITH A 2% INTEREST PROJECT RATE FROM EXIM BANK, CHINA. REST IS PROVIDED BY GOB

CAPACITY
28,305 VEHICLES PER DAY
COULD BE AS HIGH AS 162,000 VEHICLES PER DAY BY 2067

WHY NOT A BRIDGE
BUILDING A BRIDGE OVER THIS ROUTE FOR CONNECTING ANWARA AND PATENGA WOULD HAVE DESTROYED BANGLADESH'S PRIME SEAPORT, NAVAL DEFENSE, AND OTHER INDUSTRIES AS WELL

1ST UNDERWATER TUNNEL IN SOUTH ASIA

10.7m WIDTH | **4.9m** HEIGHT

3.4 KILOMETRES LENGTH | **60** KM/H SPEED LIMIT | **40** KILOMETRES REDUCED

150 FEET BELOW KARNAPHULI RIVER



Chittagong Port Authority Act, 2022

Priority to Progressive, Smart and Environment-friendly Port Operations

CPA News desk

Chittagong Port is the lifeblood of Bangladesh's economy. 92% of the country's import-export trade is conducted through Chittagong Port. In the fiscal year 2021-22, the port's revenue was BDT 3585 crore. According to the Lloyd's List, Chittagong Port currently ranks 67th among the world's busiest container ports. The Chittagong Port Authority controls and manages all types of operations, including the port's navigational activities, development, and maintenance. To smoothly manage this massive operation and to maintain coordination among various stakeholders of the port, it is necessary for the port authority to ensure the application of the law. To make the prevailing law

contemporary, a new law was enacted in 2022 by repealing the Chittagong Port Authority Ordinance, 1976. The new law is known as the 'Chittagong Port Authority Act, 2022'.

History of Port and Port Law

Commercial goods have been transported by sea since the dawn of civilisation. Civilisations involved in maritime trade have tended to build ports since ancient times. All major civilisations have developed around ports. New cities and regions have been built around the port. The Indian subcontinent, rich in natural resources, has been conducting trade through ports

for thousands of years. According to some archaeologists, India's Lothal port is the oldest in the world. People of the Indus Valley Civilisation traded with people in the Sumerian and Egyptian regions through the Lothal port. Over time, human dependence on ports has increased significantly.

Maritime law has been controlling issues such as the safety of workers on ships, ship salvage, and insurance since ancient times. The first maritime or Admiralty law was documented in ancient Egypt. However, based on the maritime law prevalent in the island of Rhodes around 900 BC, the Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, and Phoenicians have developed modern

maritime law. The Rhodian maritime law, which began around 900 BC to manage and control maritime trade in the Mediterranean region, was well established by 300 BC. The law influenced Roman law until 1200 AD. The Rhodian law established a standard for commercial ships to travel from port to port. In addition, if any kind of conflict arises at sea, instead of resolving it under local law, arrangements are made to resolve the conflict according to Rhodian law.

Following the Rhodian maritime law, the Romans created three separate codes of maritime law between 1000-1300 AD and developed a court system in the Mediterranean region. Later, like the Mediterranean law, Europe formally enacted maritime law in the early stages of 1152 AD. In 1336 AD, these laws were summarised in the Admiralty Black Book, which has been influencing Admiralty law worldwide from that time to the present. Some legal concepts of the present time are influenced by that law. Notable among them are the Log of Wisby in the Baltic region, the Log of Hansa in the German region, and the Log of Oleron in the French region. Based on these three laws, the British Admiralty Law was formulated.

After formulating the British Admiralty Law, the United Kingdom enacted the Port Law in 1908. Through this law, the 'Port Authority' was established in London, Britain's most important port. This law was prevalent in our country under British rule. The law was repealed under Pakistani rule in 1954. Later, the then government issued the 'East Pakistan Port Rules' in November 1966 through a gazette.

Chittagong Port

Chittagong Port is the oldest and busiest port in Bangladesh. Located at the estuary of the Karnaphuli River, this natural port is very ancient. The existence of this port dates back to four centuries before the birth of Christ. At that time, the port was known as Setagang. Arab merchants considered Chittagong a village of Bengal Delta. According to travellers Fa-Hien and Ibn Battuta, Chittagong has been integrated with ancient civilisations around the world. In the ninth century, traders from Yemen and Arabia used to dock at the ports of Surat, Cochin, Tamralipta, and Chittagong in India for trade. Chittagong Port played a very important role in their trade, so they kept this port under their control for a long time. At that time, the fame and effectiveness of Chittagong Port spread to various parts of the world. Arab traders influenced Chittagong Port for almost 100 years. During that time, significant development was achieved at the port.

Due to its geographical location, traders from various countries began to use this port commercially for establishing trade relations with Bengal and the whole of India. After the Arabs, the Europeans started operations at this port. Among the European traders, the Portuguese were the first to arrive in India in 1517 and started using Chittagong Port extensively. Portuguese sailors named this port 'Porte Grande'. In the 17th and 18th centuries, as the British expanded their power in the Indian subcontinent, the activities of the Portuguese at Chittagong Port gradually decreased. On the other hand, due to the creation of natural pathways for movement in the northeastern region, the importance of Chittagong Port increases day by day.

At the beginning of British rule, British and local traders built wooden jetties on the Karnaphuli River at their own expense in exchange for an annual auction of one taka. Later, the first two temporary jetties were built in 1860. The Chittagong Port Commissioner was formed in 1887 and was operational on April 25, 1888. In the same year, two mooring jetties were built at Chittagong Port.

The first major private investment in Chittagong Port was made by the Assam Bengal Railway Company Limited. To make the port more operational, between 1899 and 1910, the Chittagong Port Commissioner and Assam Bengal Railway jointly built four permanent jetties and connected the port to the railway in 1910. Due to its significant role in the trade and commerce of this region, Chittagong Port

was declared a major port in 1928. Until 1960, Chittagong Port was run under the dual administration of the Chittagong Port Commissioner and Assam Bengal Company Limited. In 1960, the Chittagong Port Commissioner was transformed into the Chittagong Port Trust.

Chittagong Port Authority

In the post-independence period, Chittagong Port became the largest and national port of Bangladesh. At that time, work began on the expansion of the port. At the same time, the then-government took various steps, including granting autonomous status to the port, intending to modernise Chittagong Port at the international level and provide opportunities for independent work. In continuation of this, in September 1976, the Bangladesh government transformed the Chittagong Port Trust into an autonomous government agency, the Chittagong Port Authority. The Chittagong Port Authority is being operated as an agency under the Ministry of Shipping.

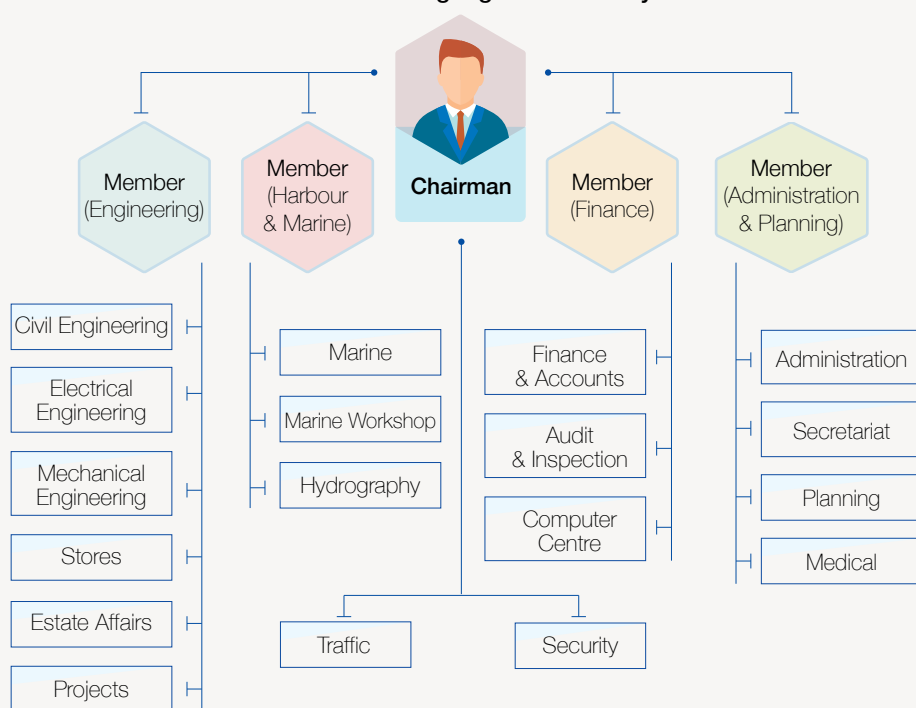
Chittagong Port Authority Act 2022

After the emergence as an independent country, the Bangladesh government issued the Chittagong Port Authority Ordinance in 1976 for the country's main seaport. Later, the ordinance underwent a revision process in 1995. In the amendment, a total of 15 changes were made to the 'Chittagong Port Authority Ordinance, 1976'. Among them, increasing the number of board members from three to four, controlling the activities of

In September of 1976, the Bangladeshi Government undertook a significant administrative reform by transforming the Chittagong Port Trust into an autonomous governmental entity, officially designated as the Chittagong Port Authority



Board of Chittagong Port Authority



licensed representatives under the Customs Act, 1969 (Act No. 4 of 1969) within the port boundaries, increasing the penalty for toll evasion from five thousand to fifty thousand, and setting a maximum environmental pollution penalty of one lakh taka are notable. The Chittagong Port Authority was transformed into an autonomous government agency in 1976.

Twenty-six years after the amendment of 1995, an initiative was taken to modernise the Chittagong Port Ordinance. On November 15, 2021, the ‘Chittagong Port Authority Bill-2022’ was introduced in the parliament and subsequently sent to the relevant parliamentary standing committee of the Ministry of Shipping for examination and reporting. Following this, on April 5, 2022, Minister of State for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury proposed the bill in parliament, and it was passed by voice vote. The law received presidential approval on April 13, 2022. Some changes have been made in the new law to make port operations more progressive, modern, and environment-friendly.

Port Authority - Power, Responsibility, and Function

In the new law, the power, responsibility, and function of the Port Authority have been mentioned more clearly. The administration and management of the Port Authority are

vested in a board consisting of a Chairman and a maximum of four members. According to the law, the board performs its functions. The Chairman of the Board also serves as the Chief Executive of the Port Authority. If the position of Chairman is vacant or for some reason the Chairman is temporarily unable to perform his duties, the senior member of the Board performs those duties until a new Chairman is appointed. The board must hold a meeting every two months. For quorum in the meeting, at least two members must be present. Each member present at the meeting can cast one vote on any issue to be decided. In case of equal votes, the person performing the duties of Chairman or Chairperson of the Board will cast a decisive or second vote. In addition, the Port Authority has the power to form a committee consisting of any member, officer, or other person as required.

The port boundary in the 2022 law remains as it was in the 1976 ordinance. However, some sections have been added to ensure modern facilities at the port. According to section 10(2) (kha) and (ga) of the new law, the Port Authority will construct, repair, maintain and operate electricity, gas, water supply lines and substations within the port area. In addition to this, it will provide electricity and water services to consumers within the port area in exchange for money. It will also provide internet and

telecommunication services to strengthen communication facilities. According to section 10(2)(pa) and (fa), for increasing port jurisdiction, port development and operation; consultation and cooperation from local, foreign or government agencies; establishing relations with experienced port authorities or institutions in other countries (sister ports), signing agreements or similar legal documents will be done by Port Authority.

The Port Authority is a statutory body, which has a common seal and the power to sue in its own name. According to subsections 1 and 2 of section 16 of the new law, the Port Authority can give written permission to any person or institution to construct any dock, pier, berth or other structure below the high watermark, subject to conditions. The Port Authority also has the power to remove any structure built without permission. For the removal of unauthorised structures, the Port Authority will provide a notice to the concerned person or institution. If the structure is not removed within the time specified in the notice, the Port Authority will impose a fine of at least BDT10,000 on the said person or institution for each subsequent day. On the other hand, if any land is needed for port operations, it will be considered necessary for the public interest. According to the Immovable Property Acquisition and Requisition Act of 2017, that land has been given to the Port Authority for requisition or acquisition.

According to sections 58 and 59, for the purpose of fulfilling the objectives of the ‘Chittagong Port Authority Act’, the Port Authority may formulate necessary rules and provisions through notification in the government gazette.

Employment

There was a time when the Dockworkers Board was responsible for the recruitment of port labourers. However, in 2007, the stevedoring system was abolished, and a berth and terminal operator system was introduced. Under this system, berth and terminal operators were tasked with hiring labour and handling goods. This system underwent changes in the Chittagong Port Authority Act of 2022. As per sub-sections 1-3 of Section 18 of the new Act, the Port Authority has been granted the power to employ any individual or organisation as a berth or terminal operator in either part or all of the port. This is for the purpose of receiving, loading, storing, releasing, and delivering goods at the port, subject to necessary conditions and prescribed procedures. In accordance with the Contract Act of 1872 (Act No. 9 of 1872), the operator will be held accountable for any damage,

destruction or loss of goods under their control as a berth or terminal operator. On the other hand, as per the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006, all justifiable demands of workers employed by the berth or terminal operator will be met.

In accordance with the first and second subsections of Section 49 of the new legislation, the Port Authority has the ability to hire the necessary personnel for the effective implementation of its duties. This is subject to the government's prior approval and adherence to the employment procedures and conditions stipulated in the provisions. Furthermore, under Section 50, for the public's benefit, the government has the authority to assign any officer or employee of the Port Authority to any institution under the Ministry of Shipping. It can also assign any officer or employee from such institutions to any suitable position within the Port Authority.

According to Sections 51 and 52, the Chairman, members, and other employees of the Port Authority are considered public servants as per Section 21 of the Penal Code of 1860 (Act No. 45 of 1860). In addition, the board has the power to delegate any authority to its Chairman, members, or any employee, subject to conditions specified by a general or special order.

Use of Funds and Social Responsibility

Funds can be used for all tasks related to the development, expansion, modernisation, operation, management, security, and employee salaries of the port. In addition, the context of using funds in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sector has been mentioned in the new law. According to the law, the Port Authority can use funds for necessary social facilities for its employees and individuals specified in the law. This includes education, health, housing, skill development, training, sports, recreational activities, and other specified activities. The Port Authority can also use funds for infrastructural development and environmental improvement. In terms of expenditure of funds, the Port Authority must follow the rules and directives issued by the government.

Fees Collection - Exemption and Penalty

Under the provisions of the Port Authority Act 2022, any outstanding rents, fees, toll rates, duties, and arrears, as per the Public Demands Recovery Act of 1913 (Act No. 3 of 1913), are recoverable as claims by the Government. The collection of port rent



Efficiency in Motion: A Bustling Day at Chittagong Port, the Economic Lifeline of Bangladesh

and tolls must be itemised with the consent of the government. However, there is no requirement for approval for the waiver of recoverable rent, tolls, rates, fees, and charges up to BDT 1 lakh.

Conversely, as per Section 32 (Sub-section 1) of the Act, if any rent, fine, fee, toll, rate, levy or compensation due to the Authority remains unpaid under this Act or its rules or regulations, the Authority has the right to recover the amount by auctioning off goods under its jurisdiction. Furthermore, it is considered an offence if any individual attempts to remove or causes the removal of any goods, ship, animal or vehicle with the intention to evade any rent, fee, toll, rate or duty. The individual responsible for such an act may face a maximum imprisonment of six months or a fine not exceeding BDT 1 lakh or both.

As per Section 40 of the Act, any violation of a provision under this Act (for which no punishment is specified in the Act) is subject to a penalty of imprisonment not exceeding six months, a fine not exceeding BDT 2 lakh or both. Furthermore, Section 43 stipulates that if any damage occurs to the dock, pier, any establishment or the authority due to the negligence of a ship's master or anyone working on the ship, compensation will be sought from the owner, master or representative of the said ship by the extent of the damage.

The new Act's Section 45 ensures appropriate investigation and prosecution of offences. It states that the provisions of

the Code of Criminal Procedure apply to the investigation, trial, appeal and other matters related to any offence committed under this Act. This is subject to the Port Authority adhering to the provisions of the Act.

Despite what is stated in section 32 (punishment for contempt) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, under section 46 of the Port Authority Act, a Magistrate has the authority to levy a fine on any individual as specified in any section of this Act. Conversely, Section 48 indicates that offences under this Act can be tried in accordance with the Schedule to the Mobile Courts Act, 2009 (Act No. 9 of 2009). However, no court shall take cognizance of any offence committed under this Act unless there is a written complaint by the Port Authority.

Limitation on Filing Cases and Immunity

Sections 56 and 57 of the Port Authority Act mention the limitation on filing cases and immunity. According to subsections 1 and 2 of Section 56 of the Act, if any person or institution wants to file a case against the Authority, the Chairman of the Authority, a member, an employee or any other person responsible, they must submit a notice with their name, address and reason for filing the case. They will have the right to file the said case one month after submitting the notice. The complainant must file the case within two months of gaining the right to file it.

On the other hand, according to Section 57 of this Act, no civil or criminal case can be filed in the name of the Authority, the Chairman of the Authority, an employee or a member for any work done in 'good faith'. Even in that case, no legal proceedings can be taken. However, this immunity will not include any deliberate negligence or misconduct by any officer or employee.

Positive Impact on the Environment

The Chittagong Port Authority Act will play a significant role in positively impacting the environment. Section 20 of the Act discusses waste management. According to the Act, the Port Authority will keep the port area clean by managing waste in a manner prescribed by the provisions. If any person or ship disposes of any waste, debris, oil or oil-based substances or anything else in the water, on the beach, on the shore or on the land of the port boundary, causing water and environmental pollution or damage to aquatic animals, plants etc., they will be punished under the Environmental Conservation Act, 1995 (Act No. 1 of 1995). If any waste is generated due to any ship or mechanical equipment in the port area, then its owner, master or representative

has to remove it. If the specified time limit for removal is exceeded, then the accused person has to pay a fine. If the accused person fails to remove the waste, then the Port Authority will remove it and for this purpose, double the cost will be recovered from the accused person.

The current government is committed to environmentally friendly development, so the new law has given the Port Authority the power to operate activities while preserving the environment. According to subsection 2 (d and dh) of Section 10 of the Act, for safe navigation and protection of navigability in port boundaries and for protection and conservation of rivers, the Port Authority will carry out river dredging, sand extraction, soil extraction and river conservation including training walls and other necessary establishments as required. In addition to this, no person or institution can excavate or fill any soil within 50 yards from the highest tide line of the port boundary without prior permission from the Port Authority. In addition to these, this law is capable of having a positive impact on the environment by constructing electricity and water production centres for port service recipients.

Conclusion

The Chittagong Port Authority Act consists of eight chapters with a total of 61 sections and 121 subsections. It provides clear instructions on the use of the Authority's fund, borrowing power, budget, accounting and inspection, and annual report, among other port management-related issues. In addition, Section 17 of the new law gives the Port Authority the power to collect river or channel usage fees and Section 22 allows for the scheduling of rent, fees, duties, and leases. As a result, the Port Authority will be able to collect river or channel usage fees from ships using berths, terminals, jetties, wharves, warehouses, stacking areas, and docks for loading and unloading goods within the port boundaries. In addition to this, with prior permission from the government, the Port Authority can schedule rents, fees, duties, leases etc., by issuing a notification in the government gazette. Therefore, it is hoped that the proper implementation of this law will not only make port operations more dynamic but also economically enrich it. ◀





▶ Prime Minister Signs UN Deep Sea Convention



In a significant move towards the responsible management of the world's deep-sea resources, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh signed the UN Convention on Ocean Protection and Deep Sea Resource Extraction and Fair Use. This historic agreement, known as the 'Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction' (BBNJ), was signed at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 21 September 2023.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen expressed his enthusiasm for the commitment Bangladesh has made to the conservation and sustainable extraction of marine resources through this accord. The signing of this agreement marks a crucial step in preserving the delicate ecosystems of the world's oceans and ensuring that deep-sea resources are utilised in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

Key provisions of the BBNJ agreement include:

No Extraction in Marine Protected Areas: Signatory nations are obligated to refrain from extracting deep-sea resources within designated Marine Protected Areas. This provision aims to safeguard critical habitats and biodiversity in these regions.

Capacity Building and Technology Transfer: Developing countries will benefit from capacity building and technology transfer initiatives to enable them to effectively extract and manage deep-sea resources. This promotes a more equitable distribution of the benefits arising from these resources.

Preventing Overfishing: The agreement emphasises the importance of sustainable resource management by discouraging overfishing. Striking a balance between resource extraction and conservation is crucial to maintaining healthy deep-sea ecosystems.

Environmental Impact Assessment: To ensure responsible resource extraction, an environmental impact assessment process will be implemented. This assessment will help in understanding the potential consequences of deep-sea resource extraction on the marine environment and ecosystems.

Preventing Ocean Pollution: Preventing and mitigating pollution in the oceans is a priority under the BBNJ agreement. This includes addressing issues related to plastic pollution, chemical contaminants, and other forms of pollution that can harm the marine environment.

Investing in Research: The agreement emphasises the allocation of financial resources towards research efforts aimed at better understanding the deep sea and its ecosystems. This research will aid in informed decision-making and responsible resource management.

The signing of the UN Convention on Ocean Protection and Deep Sea Resource Extraction and Fair Use reflects Bangladesh's commitment to sustainable and responsible use of deep-sea resources. It is a testament to the nation's dedication to preserving the world's oceans for future generations while ensuring equitable access to the valuable resources found in the depths of the sea. This international collaboration marks a significant step towards global marine conservation and resource management.

▶ Chittagong Port Pays Homage on National Mourning Day with a Resolve to Transform Grief into Strength



The Chittagong Port Authority commemorated the 48th martyrdom anniversary of Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and observed the National Mourning Day with solemnity, embarking on various programmes that spanned throughout the day. This year's theme for Mourning Day was 'turning grief into power,' symbolising the collective determination to transform grief into strength.

The day's observance commenced at 6 am on August 15, with the national flag being hoisted at half-mast in all port offices, educational institutions, and vessels, including the iconic port building. At 9 am, Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail, the Chairman of the Port Authority, alongside board members, paid their heartfelt tributes by laying wreaths at the portrait of the Father of the Nation, situated at the

Port Building premises. Following this, at 9:30, the Port Chairman planted a tree in the presence of departmental heads, officers, employees, as well as the president, general secretary, and other leaders of the Port Employees Council.

At 10 am, a substantial mourning rally was organised, led by Member of Parliament for Chittagong-11 Constituency, MA Latif, and Port Chairman Rear Admiral Sohail. The rally concluded its procession at the Port Authority High School, passing through the Custom Junction. Subsequently, a discussion meeting and an award distribution ceremony were held at the Shaheed Fazlur Rahman Munsif Auditorium. The discussion meeting encompassed conversations about Bangabandhu's life and his invaluable contributions, featuring participation from port officials, students from schools, colleges, and madrasas.

▶ Prime Minister Greenlights Maersk's Terminal Construction Proposal



In a significant development for Bangladesh's logistics and shipping sector, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given her verbal approval for APM

Terminals, a subsidiary of Denmark's AP-Molar Maersk Group, the world's second-largest shipping company, to construct and operate a terminal at Laldia Char, Patenga, situated along the banks of the Karnaphuli River. The Prime Minister directed Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority, Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail, to expedite the project's implementation.

This important decision was conveyed during a meeting on the morning of August 28, when AP-Molar Maersk Group Chairman Robert Mærsk Uggla met with the Prime Minister at her office and shared the government's consent for the terminal's construction. The move signifies a significant step in advancing Bangladesh's logistics supply chain, fostering sophisticated and technology-based management within the sector. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Tofazzal Hossain Mia, was also present at the meeting to discuss the project's implications.

Following their meeting with the Prime Minister, APM Terminals announced their intent to promptly complete the feasibility study and initiate the project's implementation. The company had initially proposed to the Ministry of Shipping last April, expressing their interest in investing in the construction and operation of a new terminal at Laldia Char within Chittagong Port.

Chittagong Port Chairman Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail highlighted the potential for foreign investment in the construction of the terminal at Laldia. He stated that Denmark's investment in the project could be part of a larger trend of port-centric investments totaling USD3 billion over the next three to five years. Such investments are expected to bolster the country's foreign exchange reserves while strengthening the logistics supply chain. Furthermore, they may attract investments from other leading shipping companies worldwide, aligning with the technology-based investment approach envisioned by the Prime Minister's Vision 2041.

Prominent exporters and importers in the country have welcomed APM Terminal's proposal, viewing it as a positive development. They believe that efficient terminal management will enhance the country's supply chain system. Encouraging such investments is deemed essential to improve the logistics sector. Currently, APM Terminals operates 21 container ships in Bangladesh, in addition to their involvement in the logistics sector, which encompasses container transport, warehousing, and freight forwarding. Notably, around 30% of Bangladesh's import and export containers are handled by the company.

While the company is already active in the shipping and logistics sector in Bangladesh, the terminal management business is a new venture for them. According to information available on APM Terminals' website, they operate 65 terminals and ports in 37 countries worldwide. If the proposal for the Laldia terminal in Bangladesh is finalised, the company intends to invest USD400 million in constructing an environmentally friendly and fully automated terminal. This development is poised to have far-reaching implications for the country's trade and logistics industry, making strides towards a more efficient and technologically advanced supply chain.

▶ Bangladesh Invites Dutch Investment in Shipbuilding Sector

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina extended a warm invitation to the Netherlands, urging them to invest in the country's shipbuilding sector. This call for cooperation was made during a farewell meeting with the outgoing Ambassador of the Netherlands to Bangladesh, Anne van Leeuwen.

In a cordial exchange at the Prime Minister's office, Sheikh Hasina offered land to the Netherlands, emphasising the potential for mutual benefits through investment in Bangladesh's shipbuilding industry. The Prime Minister expressed a willingness to provide space for drydocks, underscoring her commitment to fostering economic growth and international collaboration.

Both the Prime Minister and the outgoing Ambassador conveyed their satisfaction with the existing bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the Netherlands. They expressed optimism regarding the continuation of this collaboration for further economic development.

Several key topics featured in the discussion, including the Delta Plan-2100, climate change, and the global economic situation. Prime Minister Hasina and Ambassador Leeuwen recognised the significance of the Delta Plan-2100 and affirmed the Netherlands' support for its implementation. They stressed the importance of Bangladesh benefiting from the Netherlands' expertise in various sectors, particularly water management, agricultural development, and information and communication technology (ICT).

Ambassador Leeuwen expressed his contentment with his tenure in Bangladesh, stating that the country would hold a special place in his heart. He underscored the Dutch commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation with Bangladesh, aiming for deeper and more robust ties in the future.

Climate change was another prominent topic of discussion during the meeting. Prime Minister Hasina emphasised Bangladesh's determination to address climate change challenges effectively. She noted that Bangladesh, like the Netherlands, faces threats such as cyclones and floods, making it crucial to find innovative solutions for land reclamation and disaster resilience. Sheikh Hasina also recounted Bangladesh's history in managing natural disasters and building cyclone shelters, initiated by the country's founding leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The meeting was attended by Ambassador at-large Mohammad Ziauddin and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Tofazzal Hossain Mia, underscoring the importance of the discussions and the potential for enhanced cooperation between Bangladesh and the Netherlands in various areas, including shipbuilding and climate resilience.

▶ Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Proposes Use of Payra Port to Nepal



In a recent meeting with Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, extended an offer to Nepal to use the Payra port. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the United Nations Food System Conference on 24 July 2023, where the two leaders convened at the newly inaugurated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Room within the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) headquarters.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen shared the details of the discussion with reporters, stating that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made the proposal during the meeting. Bangladesh has already opened its Chalan (Mongla) and Chittagong ports for Nepal, and now the country is welcoming Nepal to utilise the newly established Payra Port.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also revealed that Bangladesh is actively developing Syedpur Airport with the goal of establishing it as a regional hub to enhance connectivity throughout the region.

Foreign Minister Momen noted that the Prime Minister of Nepal expressed appreciation for the remarkable progress and development witnessed in Bangladesh under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, emphasising her influential role in the region. He quoted the Nepali Prime Minister as saying, "You are the leader of our region." This reflects the respect and admiration that Bangladesh's Prime Minister has garnered for her leadership and contributions to regional growth and cooperation.

▶ Chittagong Port Authority to Support the Construction of Oil and Gas Terminal in Bay Terminal Area



In a move to bolster the import, processing, and storage capabilities of gas and petroleum oil, Chittagong Port Authority is gearing up to build a state-of-the-art oil and gas terminal within the expansive Bay Terminal area. State Minister for Shipping, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, expressed the critical importance of this initiative, highlighting how the terminal will significantly enhance the storage capacity for gas and fuel, while ensuring a steady supply of liquid fuel and edible oil at affordable prices to address the nation's ongoing fuel oil crisis.

State Minister Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury made this announcement during a meeting held at the Ministry of Shipping on 14 September 2023, where he underscored the project's positive impact on the country's overall economy. He stressed the need for expeditious construction of the oil and gas terminal, pointing

out that its completion would not only benefit Chittagong Port but also have positive ripple effects on other ports across the region. The State Minister urged Chittagong Port Authority's Chairman to take effective measures to advance the terminal's construction.

The meeting, which addressed this significant infrastructure development, saw the participation of senior officials, including Md. Mostafa Kamal, Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping, Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail, Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority, Rear Admiral Golam Sadek, Chairman of Payra Port Authority, Rear Admiral Mir Ershad Ali, Chairman of Mongla Port Authority, and Azam J. Chowdhury, Chairman of the East Coast Group.

EC Holdings Limited, a major player within the East Coast Group actively involved in the hydrocarbon and renewable energy sectors, has expressed keen interest in overseeing the construction of the terminal. To facilitate this endeavor, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been formally signed between Chittagong Port Authority and the East Coast Group. The project envisions the establishment of an oil and gas terminal within the Chittagong Port area, with the primary aim of encouraging both domestic and foreign investments.

As part of this agreement, a comprehensive analysis has been conducted to determine the technical feasibility and market demand for setting up various facilities within the Bay Terminal area, including a Refrigerated LPG Terminal, Land-Based LPG Terminal, Petrochemical Processing Terminal, Petroleum Product Storage Terminal, and a Vegetable Oil Terminal. The project's implementation is projected to require an estimated total investment of approximately USD3.5 billion, which will encompass foreign investments as well.

The demand for gas and fuel oil in Bangladesh has witnessed a significant surge, but the country's storage capacity for these essential resources has not grown in tandem. Although there has been a slight increase in the capacity of oil and gas reserves in the Maheshkhali area of Cox's Bazar, the growing demand necessitates the swift construction of the proposed oil and gas terminal. This ambitious project holds the potential to reshape the landscape of fuel and commodity storage in the country, ultimately ensuring a more secure and cost-effective energy supply for Bangladesh.

▶ Prime Minister's Leadership Praised at IMO for Empowering Women in Maritime Sector



Speakers at a high-level panel discussion 'Empowering Women in Maritime and Oceans Diplomacy' praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership to encourage women in the maritime industry including the induction of women into the marine academy. The event

was organised in the last week of September 2023 by the Bangladesh High Commission, London at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

High Commissioner for Bangladesh to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem, in her capacity of the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the IMO and the President of the Women in Diplomacy Network (WDN), London chaired the discussion participated and attended by more than 100 delegates including Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Permanent Representatives to the IMO, senior officials and experts.

Highlighting the lower visibility of women in the global maritime industry, the High Commissioner said that among the 1.2 million certified seafarers worldwide, women represent only 1.28%. Similarly, women constitute only 2% of the crewing workforce in the cruise industry.

High Commissioner Tasneem took pride in Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visionary decision to induct women cadets in the Marine Industry, and said, "Due to the Prime Minister's visionary leadership, over 100 female seafarers and mariners are recruited annually for a range of roles, including Navigation Officers, Marine Engineers, and even senior management positions such as Captain. These transformative efforts have made a significant impact in promoting gender diversity in the traditionally male-dominated maritime industry."

The envoy expressed the strong commitment of the WDN to working in close collaboration with the IMO Secretariat, fellow members of the IMO, the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA International), Women in Maritime Associations (WIMAs), and leading shipping industry associations including BIMCO to promote gender equality and to amplify the voices of women in the maritime sector.

▶ Road Widening Project to Expedite Goods Transport from Chittagong Port to India

A transformative project aimed at facilitating the efficient transportation of goods between India and Bangladesh is underway, with the widening of the 38-kilometre Bariyarhat-Heyako-Ramgarh road. The road expansion initiative, funded through a Line of Credit (LoC), is set to significantly reduce travel time, offering a swifter and more convenient route for export-import activities centered on the Ramgarh land port.

Key components of this expansive project include the construction of nine bridges spanning 249.20 metres, 23 culverts measuring 108 metres, and the widening of 38 kilometres of road to a width of 38 feet. Once this endeavor is completed, goods will be able to traverse from Chittagong Port to India via the Ramgarh land port in a mere three hours, covering a distance of 112 kilometres.

In a prior project, contractor CPCL successfully concluded the construction of 16 bridges and culverts extending from Ramgarh to Baryarhat, with BDT 281 crore funding from JICA. This significant infrastructure enhancement also encompassed the development of 200 to 300-metre approach roads on each side of the bridge.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader inaugurated the road widening project through a virtual ceremony on 24 May 2023, marking a significant step toward the realisation of enhanced trade and commerce between the two nations.

▶ Approval Granted for Bangladesh Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration Contract

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has provided in-principle approval for the draft 'Bangladesh Offshore Model Production Sharing Contract (PSC) 2023.' This significant decision paves the way for offshore oil and gas exploration in both deep and shallow seas, addressing the growing demand for energy resources, particularly to meet the country's Jalani demand. The approval came during an online meeting held on 26 July 2023, with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal presiding over the proceedings.

The Bangladesh Offshore Model Production Sharing Contract (PSC) 2023 represents a crucial step towards tapping into the nation's offshore energy potential. This contract framework is designed to facilitate and regulate exploration activities in deep and shallow seas, promoting investment and enhancing the country's energy security.

In addition to the approval of the PSC, the Cabinet Committee on Public Procurement also greenlit a proposal to allocate BDT 5,000 crore for five projects under the Road Transport and Highways Department. This allocation underscores the government's commitment to infrastructure development and improving transportation networks. The Finance Minister led the proceedings in this meeting as well.

The approval of the offshore exploration contract signifies a positive move to harness Bangladesh's offshore energy resources, contributing to the nation's energy independence and economic growth.



▶ Chittagong Port Authority Takes Control of Matarbari Channel in Landmark Handover



A significant milestone in Bangladesh's maritime infrastructure development unfolded as the Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGCBL) officially handed over control of the Matarbari deep-sea port channel to the Chittagong Port Authority. The handover ceremony, held at the Port Auditorium, saw Abul Kalam Azad, Managing Director of CPGCBL, formally transferring responsibility to Chittagong Port Authority Chairman Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail.

The event was graced by the presence of esteemed dignitaries, with the Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, Md. Tofazzal Hossain Mia, attending as the chief guest.

As a result of this transfer, the Chittagong Port Authority will now oversee the use, conservation, and comprehensive control of the Matarbari channel. Responsibilities will include collecting port dues, berth hire charges, piloting, tug charges, berthing-unberthing fees, and other charges related to seagoing vessels navigating this vital channel. This transition is anticipated to yield substantial foreign currency earnings, making a significant contribution to the nation's economy.

The genesis of this transformation can be traced back to the Government's approval, which allowed CPGCBL to undertake the excavation of the Matarbari channel that spans 14.3 kilometres in length, 250 metres in width, and 18.5 metres in depth. This endeavor was carried out in conjunction with the construction of a 1,200 MW coal-based power plant. A key development occurred when a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Power, Water, and Mineral Resources on November 29, 2018, charting out plans for the construction of the Matarbari Port. The channel's width was subsequently increased from 250 to 350 metres, solidifying its importance as a transportation route.

To ensure the security and stability of the newly constructed channel and harbor, CPGCBL invested in important infrastructure. This included the construction of 1,753 metres of breakwater in the north, 713 metres of breakwater in the south, and 1,803 metres of revetment (rock walls) in the north, strengthening the area's resilience to environmental forces.

▶ Bangladesh Nears Century Mark with 99 Seagoing Ships in Its Fleet

Bangladesh is on the brink of achieving a remarkable milestone in its maritime industry, with the number of registered seagoing vessels reaching 99. It is expected that the nation will soon celebrate its 100th seagoing ship, marking a significant achievement for the country's shipping sector.

These registered vessels play a crucial role in transporting goods to and from various ports around the world, contributing to the country's trade and commerce. Additionally, efforts are underway to register more ships, solidifying Bangladesh's standing as an emerging player in the global shipping industry.

Traders and experts suggest that the current market conditions present an ideal opportunity for Bangladeshi businessmen to acquire older or used seagoing vessels from the international market. They emphasise that if the government takes specific measures to address issues like the debt crisis, dollar exchange rates, and margins, it could enable local businesses to swiftly add these ships to their fleets. This, in turn, could lead to substantial savings in freight costs, potentially amounting to billions of dollars.

Captain Sabbir Mahmud, Principal Officer of the Department of Shipping, noted that among the 99 registered seagoing ships, 97 are actively involved in transporting goods. The process of acquiring two additional vessels is currently underway, with the 100th ship expected to be registered soon. However, the figure has temporarily dropped to 98 due to the scrapping of one ship in the meantime.

The world's ocean-going ship management industry faced significant challenges at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading many to consider scrapping their ships. Bangladesh seized this opportunity, registering 32 ships one by one. The government's supportive policies played a pivotal role in enabling local entrepreneurs to become ship owners. The current market conditions are reminiscent of that earlier period, offering another chance for Bangladesh to expand its maritime footprint.

According to the Department of Shipping, SR Shipping, a part of the Chittagong-based KSRM Group, boasts the highest number of registered ships among active Bangladeshi seafarers, with a total of 25 vessels. The Meghna Group secures the second position with 22 registered vessels, while Akiz Group possesses 10, HR Line (a division of the Karnaphuli Group) has 9, and the state-owned Bangladesh Shipping Corporation operates seven ships. Additionally, the Bashundhara Group owns six, Vanguard Shipping has six, BS Shipping operates three, Duryea Shipping owns two, Hanif Maritime possesses two, and several other prominent companies each have one or more ships in their fleets.

These registered vessels span a range of ages, with most falling between 18 and 20 years old. Surprisingly, some 30-year-old ships are still actively engaged in transporting goods, emphasising the resilience and longevity of these seagoing vessels. Notably, Meghna Group has acquired a brand new ship in Bangladesh, adding four new vessels to its fleet since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the industry's ongoing growth and potential.

➤ Saif Powertech to Revolutionise Cargo Transport on Chittagong-Kolkata Route



A significant development in the field of cargo transportation is on the horizon as Saif Powertech Ltd., a prominent terminal operator in Bangladesh, has formally entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kolkata Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Seaport in India. This landmark agreement, inked on 25 September 2023 at the Kolkata Port Building, signifies the very first MoU signed by a Bangladeshi terminal operator to facilitate cargo transportation with an Indian seaport, marking a pioneering stride in enhancing regional trade and logistics.

Under this transformative partnership, Saif Powertech is poised to play a pivotal role in streamlining the transportation of goods from mainland India to the states in Northeast

India, utilising Chittagong Port as a key gateway for this dynamic logistics operation. The collaboration is expected to result in more efficient and expedited cargo services, promising to revamp the logistics landscape of the region and bolster trade ties between the two nations.

The MoU signing ceremony was presided over by Rathendra Raman, Chairman of the Kolkata Port Authority, who commended the collaboration as a momentous step towards strengthening regional connectivity and trade. Representing the Kolkata Port, Traffic Manager RS Raj officially signed the agreement, while Managing Director Tarfdar Ruhul Amin represented Saif Powertech, finalising a historic pact that promises to reshape cargo transportation between Bangladesh and India and unlock new horizons for cross-border trade.

➤ World Bank Allocates USD100 Million to Enhance Jamuna River Protection and Navigability in Bangladesh

The World Bank has approved a substantial USD100 million loan to Bangladesh to support critical initiatives aimed at safeguarding the banks of the Jamuna River, enhancing its navigability, and preserving the livelihoods of communities residing along the river. With the current exchange rate of the dollar at 109 taka 50 paisa, this generous funding amounts to approximately BDT 1,117 crore in Bangladeshi currency. The World Bank's approval for this project was granted on 20 September 2023, and this announcement was made through an official press release.

The World Bank's financial backing will be channeled into the Sustainable Management Project for the Jamuna River. If successfully implemented, this project is expected to substantially improve the navigability of the Jamuna River, allowing large vessels to navigate the river throughout the year. Additionally, it will revitalise inland waterway transportation, breathing new life into regional communication and trade. The project's success will play a pivotal role in safeguarding agricultural lands against river erosion and flood-related damages.

Abdoulaye Seck, the head of the World Bank in Bangladesh, conveyed in a statement that the Jamuna River stands as one of the largest and most dynamic rivers globally, with the livelihoods of millions of individuals closely intertwined with its ebb and flow. He noted that, each year, thousands of people face displacement due to river erosion attributed to the adverse effects of climate change, subsequently plunging them into poverty. The sustainable and climate-resilient management of the Jamuna River, Sek added, would undoubtedly yield substantial economic benefits for both the nation and its people.

Highlighting the significance of this project, the World Bank pointed out that it is the first of its kind in Bangladesh. The project is set to be executed in the regions of Phulchari, Gaibandha, and Kalihati. It is anticipated to directly benefit around 100,000 individuals, offering them secure and cost-effective transportation alternatives for those who prefer river travel.

➤ Chevron Expresses Interest in Oil and Gas Exploration in the Bay of Bengal

The American energy giant Chevron Corporation has conveyed its interest in conducting oil and gas exploration activities in the Bay of Bengal, following a similar proposal from Exxon Mobil, another prominent American company. Minister of State for Agriculture Nasrul Hamid disclosed this latest development.

Nasrul Hamid revealed that Chevron, after witnessing Exxon Mobil's interest, has formally submitted a written proposal to undertake deep-sea oil and gas exploration in Bangladesh. Notably, a surge of interest from multiple companies to participate in the nation's maritime energy sector is being observed.

Sheikh Zahidur Rahman, a spokesperson for Chevron Bangladesh, shared that Chevron has played a vital role in catering to Bangladesh's natural gas requirements for several years. Their ongoing commitment to investing in gas exploration and discoveries in the region is a testament to their dedication to meeting Bangladesh's energy needs.

Bangladesh had previously resolved maritime boundary disputes with Myanmar in 2012 and India in 2014, securing its ownership of the sea. Subsequently, both India and Myanmar discovered gas reserves in their respective territorial waters. However, the extent of gas reserves in Bangladesh's sea territories is yet to be confirmed. This has generated substantial interest from international corporations looking to tap into the country's energy potential in the Bay of Bengal.



▶ Chittagong Port Authority Aims to Accommodate 11-Metre Draft Ships by 2024



The Chittagong Port Authority has set forth an ambitious plan to allow ships with an 11-metre draft (the underwater part of the ship) to dock at the port by the year 2024. To assess the feasibility of this endeavor, the authority is currently conducting in-depth studies. Presently, the port can only accommodate ships with up to a 10-metre draft. Rear Admiral Mohammad Sohail, the Chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority, shared this significant development during an engaging discussion with journalists at the conference room of the Port Building on 22 August 2023.

Rear Admiral Sohail addressed the issue of environmental concerns, noting that a substantial amount of waste from Chittagong city finds its way into the Karnaphuli River. This, in turn, leads to the gradual shallowing of the river's depth. In an effort to combat this issue, the Port Authority has already made substantial efforts to remove waste.

Mohammad Sohail conveyed optimism that within the next year, it would be possible to accommodate ships with 11- or 11.5-metre drafts at the port jetty. Achieving this objective, however, would require a cessation of waste dumping into the river.

The Chairman further underscored the port's constant operational status, emphasising that Chittagong Port remains active around the clock, seven days a week. It enjoys recognition worldwide and has been attracting attention from various countries interested in substantial investments.

Rear Admiral Sohail revealed that the new chemical shed of the port will likely be inaugurated in December, a multi-storey car shed has already been constructed, and the Patenga Container Terminal is currently undergoing trial runs. Additionally, the design for the bay terminal and its breakwater is in its final stages. Construction on the first terminal of the Matarbari deep-sea port is on the horizon, with tender negotiations in progress. The project is set to commence as soon as government approval is granted.

He acknowledged the collective dedication and unwavering commitment of the Chittagong Port Authority, working diligently under the visionary guidance of the Prime Minister and the strong leadership of the State Minister for Shipping, all while maintaining seamless coordination within the Ministry of Shipping.

▶ Bangladesh and India Initiate Trade in Rupees



In a significant development for the economic ties between Bangladesh and India, the use of the Indian rupee (Rs) in import-export trade between the two countries has officially commenced. This momentous decision was announced jointly by the Bangladesh Bank and the Indian High Commission during

an event held at the capital's Hotel La Meridien on 11 July 2023.

The Indian High Commissioner, Pranay Kumar Verma, underscored the importance of this initiative as a symbol of mutual cooperation between the neighboring nations. Governor of the Bangladesh Bank, Abdur Rauf Talukder, explained that the move was a carefully considered response aimed at alleviating the pressure on the U.S. dollar, which has been traditionally used in international trade.

Governor Talukder also expressed optimism regarding the positive impact of this currency shift on Bangladesh's exports, with the expectation that the transactions conducted in Indian rupees would contribute to a boost in export figures.

Notably, Sonali Bank and Eastern Bank in Bangladesh, alongside India's State Bank of India and ICICI Bank, have already received official authorisation from the central banks of both countries to conduct transactions in rupees. This collaborative endeavor marks a significant step toward strengthening economic ties between Bangladesh and India and simplifying trade between the two nations.

▶ Bangladesh Shipping Corporation to Acquire 4 Ships from China

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) is set to expand its fleet with the procurement of four ships from China. The decision to purchase these vessels, at an estimated cost of around BDT 2500 crore Bangladeshi, was announced following a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs and the Cabinet Committee on Government Procurement, where key details of the acquisitions were deliberated.

During this meeting, Syed Mahub Khan, an Additional Secretary of the Cabinet Department, shared the significant development. The acquisition comprises two crude oil mother tankers and two mother bulk carrier ships, which will be secured from China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation through a Government-to-Government (G2G) agreement.

The proceedings were chaired by the Finance Minister of Bangladesh, AHM Mustafa Kamal, signifying the government's commitment to bolstering the country's shipping and trade capabilities, ultimately contributing to its economic growth and stability.

▶▶ Chittagong Port Records Improvements in Key Handling Indicators



The Chittagong Port, one of Bangladesh's vital gateways for trade and commerce, has exhibited notable improvements in all three major handling indicators during the recently concluded financial year. The latest fiscal year's statistics reveal enhancements in both cargo handling and vessel handling, although container handling experienced a decrease.

In the fiscal year 2022-23, Chittagong Port handled a total of 3,307,344 TEU containers, reflecting a decrease of 248,014 TEU containers compared to the previous financial year. Despite the slight reduction in container handling, Chittagong Port has maintained its status as a key hub for three million containers. During the fiscal year 2021-22, the port had managed 3,255,358 TEU containers.

However, cargo handling at the port has surged by 122,583 metric tons, with a total of 118,296,743 metric tons of cargo handling in the most recent fiscal year. In comparison, the previous fiscal year of 2021-22 witnessed the handling of 118,174,160 metric tons of cargo.

In the first half of the fiscal year 2022-23, Chittagong Port saw the arrival of 4,253 ships, marking an increase of 22 ships when compared to the previous financial year's total of 4,231. This boost in ship arrivals demonstrates the continued significance and growth of the port, which plays a pivotal role in the country's trade and maritime activities.

▶▶ India's Expansive Maritime Connectivity Plan Includes Bangladesh Rivers for Trade Boost

India is embarking on a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing seamless maritime trade connectivity with seven eastern states, along with its neighboring nations, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal. The ambitious project envisions the establishment of a vast naval network spanning five thousand kilometres in the region. As part of this extensive network, the rivers of Bangladesh will play a crucial role, adding to the prospect of a flourishing trade ecosystem that could unlock a trade potential of approximately USD49 billion.

Sarbananda Sonowal, the Minister of Ports, Waterways, and Shipping in the Indian state of Assam, emphasised that the plan includes the rivers within Bangladesh, and their inclusion is expected to foster significant economic growth and trade expansion in the region. By working on the excavation and development of the rivers that traverse both India and Bangladesh, the project aims to further strengthen trade relationships with the seven eastern Indian states, as well as with the neighboring countries along the border, thus elevating India's influence in the region.

The comprehensive plan also features the establishment of a 3,500-kilometre Economic Corridor through Bangladesh, creating a vital link between the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Barak rivers and the rest of India. This corridor is expected to enhance trade and connectivity across the region.

Commodore Arif Ahmed Mostafa, Chairman of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), elaborated on the ongoing river excavation projects taking place in Bangladesh, many of which are supported by India and the World Bank. These projects aim to facilitate smoother trade routes and bolster economic ties.

Presently, one of the routes connecting India passes through Angtiyara in Khulna, Chandpur via Aricha, Sirajganj, and Daikhawa in North Bengal. Another route heads to India through Antihara, Chandpur, Bhairab, and Ashuganj via Zakiganj in Sylhet. Additionally, multiple routes linked to Kolkata port are under discussion, such as one via Rajshahi to Pakshi, Sultanganj via Sultanganj, and another through the Gomti River in Comilla. These initiatives are set to significantly enhance trade, connectivity, and economic cooperation in the region, ultimately contributing to the region's prosperity and growth.

▶▶ Chittagong Port Ranks 67th in Lloyd's List of Top 100 Seaports

Chittagong Port has secured the 67th position in the prestigious "100 Ports 2023" list by Lloyd's List, the world's oldest and internationally recognised shipping press. While maintaining its status as one of the world's significant seaports for container transport, Chittagong Port slipped slightly from its 64th position in the previous year's ranking.

The list, published by London-based media house Lloyd's List, analyses and ranks seaports worldwide based on the volume of annual container transport. Chittagong Port's gradual ascent in these rankings is evident, having climbed up 40 places over the last decade.

Here is a glimpse of Chittagong Port's ranking over the past several years:

2014: 86th, 2015: 87th, 2016: 76th, 2017: 71st, 2018: 70th, 2019: 64th, 2020: 58th, 2021: 67th, 2022: 64th and in 2023: 67th.

The position of Chittagong Port in this year's ranking is indicative of the global economic context it operates within. Factors such as the worldwide economic slowdown induced by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and measures to restrict the import of luxury goods to preserve foreign exchange reserves have impacted trade activities, thereby influencing the port's ranking. It is noteworthy that Chittagong Port can potentially regain its previous standing as import-export activities pick up in the future.



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