



India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Volume: 31 / Issue: 31 / September 2016

www.ibcci.net

From the President's Desk



Recent steps taken by the governments of Bangladesh and India for improvement of physical connectivity i.e. road, rail and waterways connectivity have been well received by the people of the South Asian sub-region in general and the business community of both the countries in particular.

The recently established integrated check posts at Benapole-Petrapole and Agartala land ports will help hassle free movement of goods and services from both ends and also enhance people to people contacts in both the countries.

Petrapole-Benapole is a very important land border crossing for India-Bangla trade. Around 70-80 per cent of trade between the two countries passes through these two land ports. Trade worth around USD 5 billion takes place at Petrapole, which is more than all the other Indian Land Ports and Land Customs Stations put together. Approximately 1.2 million people and 150,000 trucks cross Petrapole-Benapole every year.

Furthermore, development of infrastructures at Sheola, Thegamukh and Bhomra land ports for regional connectivity under Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative will act as added booster for enhancing volume of trade within this South Asian sub region.

Economic activities will be expanded and import-export costs will come down significantly that will be beneficial for people of the region.

Bhomra land port is very close to India's Kolkata and if facilities at this port are developed properly, businesses of both the countries will be benefited.

A cargo vehicle began its journey on 27th August night a nearly 4000-kilometre distance from Dhaka to Delhi with readymade garments to test seamless movement of freights among four countries of BBIN sub-region.

The long-haul cargo trip under the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicle agreement (MVA) was flagged off from Motijheel depot of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) on 27th August on its way to Delhi to reach its destination in around 14 days. This is another epoch making development.

Introduction of coastal shipping service between Bangladesh and India in March this year under a recent deal between the two countries is yet another significant development that would facilitate faster and seamless movement of cargoes between the two.

Bangladesh 'most attractive investment destination'

Low wages and competitive production costs made Bangladesh the top investment destination for Japanese companies in 2015, the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) said in a survey released in February this year.

The JETRO survey, carried out in 20 countries in Asia and Oceania, also said Bangladesh had been found to be the most attractive place for investments both in the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors like in the previous year.

The survey—'Conditions of Japanese Companies in Asia and Oceania'—said Bangladesh could be an attractive destination for Japanese investment, as production cost in the country



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ক্যাথ ল্যাব
সিসিইউ ও সিআইসিইউ



মেডিকেল সার্ভিসেস
ডায়াগনস্টিক



আইসিইউ




অর্থো ও
ট্রমা সেন্টার



হেমো
ডায়ালাইসিস




ইউনিভার্সেল মেডিকেল
কলেজ এন্ড হসপিটাল লিমিটেড
চাই হাসি মুখ সবার
সাবেক আশ্রয় মেমোরিয়াল হাসপাতাল

ডিজিটাল এমআরআই ১.৫ টেসলা
সিটি স্ক্যান ও ডিজিটাল এক্সরে
কালার ডপলার স্টাডি
ভাসকুলার ডপলার স্টাডি
আক্সোনোগ্রাম
ভিডিও এন্ডোস্কপি, কোলনোস্কপি
ভিডিও ব্রেনোস্কপি, ল্যারিস্কোপি
ইকোকর্ডিওগ্রাম, ইটিটি, ইইজি, ইসিজি
বিএমডি, ম্যামোগ্রাফি
স্পাইরোমেট্রি, ইউরোফ্লোমেট্রি
২৪ ঘন্টা ল্যাবরেটরী সার্ভিস
২৪ ঘন্টা ফার্মেসী
আউটডোর স্পেশালিষ্ট কনসালটেশন
স্পেশালিষ্ট ফিজিওথেরাপী সেন্টার
হেলথ চেক আপ প্যাকেজ সুবিধা
ফ্রাইডে ক্লিনিক্স
২৪ ঘন্টা জরুরী স্বাস্থ্যসেবা
আইসিইউ এ্যাম্বুলেন্স ও হেলিকপ্টার

আইসিইউ সাথে বেডসাইড ডায়ালাইসিস
করোনারি কেয়ার ইউনিট সাথে বেডসাইড ডায়ালাইসিস
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এঞ্জিওগ্রাম, এঞ্জিওপ্লাস্টি
জেনারেল ও কার্ডিয়াক সার্জারী
২৪ ঘন্টা কার্ডিয়াক ইমার্জেন্সী
পেডিয়াট্রিক ও নবজাতক আইসিইউ
ক্লিরোগ ও প্রসূতি বিদ্যা বিভাগ
মেডিসিন বিভাগ
নাক-কান-গলা রোগ বিভাগ
দন্তরোগ বিভাগ
নেফ্রোলজী ও ইউরোলজী বিভাগ
হেমোডায়ালাইসিস (পেজেটিভ ও নেগেটিভ)
হাই ডিপেন্ডেন্সী ইউনিট
রেসপাইরেটরী কেয়ার ইউনিট
৫ টি আধুনিক অপারেশন থিয়েটার
স্ট্রোক ও ফিজিওথেরাপি সেন্টার
ডায়াবেটিস ও ওবেসিটি সেন্টার

স্বল্পমূল্যে বিশেষজ্ঞ বহিঃবিভাগ স্বাস্থ্যসেবা
প্রতিদিন সকাল ১০টা থেকে দুপুর ২টা পর্যন্ত


ইউনিভার্সেল মেডিকেল
কলেজ এন্ড হসপিটাল লিমিটেড
চাই হাসি মুখ সবার



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was less than half compared to that in Japan.

Wages in Bangladesh are one-fourth of what they are in China and half of India's, observed JETRO.

However, 69 per cent of chief executive officers of the firms surveyed in the 20 countries identified rising wage bills as the highest management concern, JETRO said. Cost of production in Bangladesh—compared to that in Japan—was found to be less than half (49.5 per cent), while in other countries, especially China, Vietnam and India, the respective figures were 81.9 per cent and 80.6 per cent, the report said.

The survey rated Bangladesh highly for business confidence, giving it 63.3 points, but said Japanese firms in the country were struggling with operating profits. JETRO also said their business performance would improve in 2016.

Bangladesh's position was after Pakistan, Myanmar, India, and Sri Lanka, it added.

The annual JETRO survey, done during October–November 2015 covering 9,590 firms, put Bangladesh at fifth position from the top, with 67.4 per cent of Japanese firms favouring future expansion in the country.

It was 82 per cent in case of China, 73 per cent for Vietnam, and 80 per cent for India, it noted.

JETRO, however, recommended the creation of a congenial business environment to help reduce costs incurred by Japanese companies doing business in the country by slashing operational and running expenses.

According to JETRO, some 230 Japanese firms have invested in the country, mostly in export processing zones, involving USD 250 million.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japan, however, showed a downward trend last year. According to Bangladesh central bank data, the net inflow of FDI stood at USD 34.14 million in the January–September period of 2015, while the amount was USD 96.3 0 million in 2014.

With Bangladesh ranked fifth, 67.4 per cent of Japanese firms were amenable to expanding operations in future because of high growth potential, cost reduction, production and distribution network review, and easy-to-secure labour force.

In spite of showing interest in expansion over the next couple of years, Japanese firms in Bangladesh showed a modest downtrend during the past four to five years, and in others countries such as China, Myanmar, Vietnam, India and Thailand.

The downtrend has been especially pronounced in Bangladesh and China since 2013, while expansion prospects were becoming increasingly brighter in Myanmar.

JETRO also suggested that by offering incentives and engaging in free trade agreements (FTAs) or by setting up an Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Bangladesh could help investors diversify items ranging from intermediate to finished goods and export to Asian nations. (Courtesy: *The Independent* dated August 08, 2016)



Hasina, Modi open new Petrapole checkpoint

India with BD in fight against terror: Indian PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurate Petrapole Integrated Checkpost Thursday, July 21.

They inaugurated the second Integrated Check Post (ICP) along the Benapole-Petrapole part of Bangladesh-India border from Dhaka and New Delhi through videoconferencing. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also joined the ceremony from Kolkata.

Modi has reaffirmed that his country will extend all help to Bangladesh in its fight against terrorism.

"You are not alone in your fight against terror. India will always fully support you in all your efforts to fight this menace," said Modi at the function.

The opening of the Petrapole check-post will not only promote bilateral trade but also help economic growth in both countries, Modi observed.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (on screen) and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated Petrapole integrated check-post through a video conference

Modi said eight such integrated checkpoints will be set up along India-Bangladesh border in times to come.

"I extend Eid greetings to Bangladesh PM and its citizens," Modi told Sheikh Hasina adding, "I condemn the terror attack on Eid congregation in Kishoreganj."

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the inauguration of the checkpoint will promote trade between the two countries.

The integrated checkpoint at Agartala along the Akhaura-Agartala border was the first of seven land customs stations along the Bangladesh-India border, being upgraded by the Land Port Authority of India. It was inaugurated in November, 2013.

The others are Burimari-Chengrabandha, Sonamasjid-Mahadipur, Hilli-Hilli, Bibirbazar-Srimantpur and Banglabandhu-Fulbari.

Petrapole-Benapole is a very important land border crossing for India-Bangladesh trade. Around 70-80 per cent of the India-Bangladesh trade passes through Petrapole. Trade worth around USD 5 billion

takes place at Petrapole, which is more than all the other Indian Land Ports and Land Customs Stations put together. Approximately 1.2 million people and 150,000 trucks cross Petrapole-Benapole every year, according to a foreign ministry release.

The Petrapole ICP is envisaged to overcome the infrastructural bottlenecks to provide facilities for effective and efficient discharge of functions such as security, immigration, customs, and quarantine, while also providing support facilities for smooth cross-border movement of persons, goods and transport.

It will also be the biggest land port in South Asia. After Petrapole, the next LCS to be upgraded will be Dawki in Meghalaya where land acquisition has been completed.

It is expected that the capacity will double with the commissioning of the Petrapole ICP and the local business community will benefit immensely from reduced transaction time and costs.

The commissioning of the Petrapole ICP will also serve to foster greater economic integration and connectivity between India and Bangladesh. (Courtesy: *The Financial Express*; Dated: 22 July, 2016)

Bangladesh among 10 countries set to become new drivers of global growth

Bangladesh's export-oriented industrial sector already accounts for more than a quarter of GDP and will continue to develop as a global manufacturing hub in the coming years

Bangladesh has been named one of 10 emerging markets that are set become new drivers of global economic growth over the next 10 years.

BMI Research report says the economy is heading for impressive growth, lifted by the apparel and construction sectors.

The report released last month by the US-based research firm of the Fitch Group has identified Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan as "10 emerging markets of the future."

The countries will add about \$4.3tn to the global gross domestic product by 2025, providing significant opportunities for investors and roughly the equivalent of Japan's current economy, the report said.

"Bangladesh's export-oriented industrial sector

already accounts for more than a quarter of GDP and will continue to develop as a global manufacturing hub in the coming years," according to the report.

In general, manufacturing and construction are the sectors that will drive the economies.

BMI reports that new manufacturing hubs are set to emerge in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan, and that these countries will see particularly strong growth in exporting manufacturing industries.

And construction growth is going to be widespread throughout all the countries — partly to facilitate increases in urban populations and partly to help develop the manufacturing sector, it said.

On the other hand, extractive industries — like mining, oil, and gas — are going to play a far smaller role in driving growth than they have in the past 15 years.

While it might provide bright spots for some countries, the report stated: "The ubiquitous commodity-driven growth model that was derailed by the 2012-15

collapse in commodity prices is not coming back."

"In order to shortlist the countries, we considered those with per capita income of about \$3,500 and below, that enjoy strong enough economic and political institutions to enact reforms, are set to enjoy rapid economic growth, boast a potentially large domestic market and have an infrastructure deficit that will lead to productivity-enhancing investment," it explained.

BMI said a large domestic market implies strong growth opportunities for consumer industries.

"Moreover, large populations will provide significant opportunities for infrastructure and construction as urbanization rates rise," it said.

Stronger institutions are typically associated with better policymaking, the protection of property rights and reform, which help to underpin growth, it added.

The think tank said the countries that experience strong economic growth will provide strong investment opportunities and returns. (Courtesy: Dhaka Tribune dated July 14, 2016)

Regional rail connectivity

Bangladesh moves to restore five missing links

Bangladesh has moved to develop rail corridors with India for trans-border train connectivity to facilitate trade and investment under the BBIN bloc.

Officials said as part of the move, Bangladesh Railway has undertaken several projects to reestablish railway link through Chilahati and Birol-Radhikapur borders which are to connect with Bhutan and Nepal respectively.

They said a project to convert the meter-gauge rail track to broad-gauge one from Dinajpur to Birol-Radhikapur point has already been under implementation.

But a new proposal to resume rail link between Chilahati of Nilphamari district and Holdibari of Jalpaiguri of India has been mooted for facilitating connectivity with Bhutan, one of the four nations in the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India- Nepal (BBIN) bloc.

Bangladesh and India have seven railway interchange points, of which three are now under operation. Of the four closure points, Chilahati-Holdibari interchange remained suspended since 1965-the year when India and Pakistan fought a war.

BR officials said under the new project, 7.5-kilometre broad-gauge rail track will be set up inside Bangladesh while India will have to construct a 5.0-km stretch within its territory to reach Hasimara, the

border with Bhutan.

Though Bhutan and Nepal do not have rail connectivity within their territories, the officials said, the plan was taken to facilitate freights through multimodal way.



"If we could reach goods to Indian borders, any goods could be transported to the two Himalayan countries

by road from there,” said an official involved with the projects.

He said Nepal has already taken up a project to establish 25-kilometre rail line from Biratnagar to Zogobani after developing an inland container terminal at Biratnagar recently.

However, it is learnt that the Indian side has no project yet to develop missing link of rails inside its territory from Chilahati.

Another source said the government is interested in reestablishing rail connectivity with India by reviving all five routes for boosting regional trade.

The routes are Benapole-Bangaon, Birol-Radhikapur, Banglabandha-Shiliguri-Nepal, Akhaura-Agartala, and Khulna-Kolkata.

A meeting held at the Prime Minister’s Office in April also stressed the need for undertaking rail-connectivity projects like Radhikapur (India)-Birol (Bangladesh), Chilahati (Bangladesh)-Haldibari

(India), Shahbazpur (Bangladesh)-Mahisasan (India), Akhaura (Bangladesh)-Agartala (India) and Feni (Bangladesh)-Belonia (India).

The BR official said freight trade between Bangladesh and India has been carried out through Benapole and Rohonpur. But limited goods are also carried through Rohonpur-Singhabad route which is connected with Jogobani on the India-Nepal border.

The BR has already taken project to establish Akhaura-Laksam dual-gauge rail track as well as Akhaura-Agartala rail link to facilitate train movement within northeastern India.

Though BBIN is an initiative to establish seamless movement of all modes of transport within the four South Asian countries after the signing of Motor Vehicle Agreement by the four nations’ transport ministers on June 15, 2015, the initiative has been tried to be made popular by different quarters, including business community, to facilitate trade and business in the contiguous region. *(Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: 5th August, 2016)*

Bhomra, Sheola, Thegamukh ports under BBIN to benefit region

Development of infrastructure at Sheola, Thegamukh and Bhomra land ports for regional connectivity under Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) Initiative will not have any environmental and social impact, according to a joint China-India feasibility study report, reports BSS.



“Economic activities will be expanded and import-export costs will decrease significantly. As a result, the people of the regional will be benefited,” said the report placed in a National Public Consultation Workshop here today.

Bhomra land port is very close to India’s Kolkata and if facilities of this port are developed properly, businesses of both the countries will highly be benefited as

import-exports costs will decrease considerably, said the report conducted by China’s Yoochin and India’s Vitti JV.

Speaking at the workshop shipping minister Shajahan Khan said the government will develop Sheola, Thegamukh and Bhomra land ports for the expansion of regional trade and economic activities. Development of three ports will help expand Bangladesh’s trade with India, he added.

The minister said the three land ports will be developed under BBIN initiative with financial assistance of the World Bank.

This project has been taken for increasing the trade-commerce and export earnings, he said, adding that there were only nine land ports in the country but only two ports were in operation when the Awami League government came to power in 2009. Now there are 23 land ports in the country, he said.

Chairman of Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) Tapan Kumar Chakravorty chaired the opening session of the daylong workshop on Environmental and Social Assessment Studies of proposed Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project.

Shipping ministry’s additional secretary Md Rafiqul Islam, BLPA member Meshkat Ahmed Chowdhury and architect Iqbal Habib spoke at the session. *(Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: 11 August, 2016)*

Bangladeshis above 65 to get 5 years' Indian multiple visas

India issues first 5-year multiple entry visa to Bangladeshi

August 29: High Commission of India today issued the first five-year Multiple Entry Tourist Visa to Md Nurul Hoque Akhanda aged 68 years, resident of Gazipur.

The Government of India recently announced that Bangladesh nationals above the age of 65 years would henceforth be eligible for Long Term Multiple Entry Tourist visas valid for five years.

The continuous period of stay during each visit on Long Term Tourist visas shall not exceed 90 days.

"This is a goodwill gesture extended by the Government of India for the benefit of senior citizens. This is expected to facilitate ease of securing Indian visas and further strengthen people-to-people contacts and relations between the two countries,"



High Commissioner of India Harsh Vardhan Shringla handing over the first five-year Multiple Entry Tourist Visa to Md Nurul Hoque Akhanda aged 68 years, resident of Gazipur

said a press release of the Indian High Commission. (Courtesy: The Daily Star; Dated: 30th August, 2016)

Cargo reaches Delhi from BD on BBIN experiment

NEW DELHI, Sept 7: For the first time a cargo truck from Bangladesh drove in with a Delhi bound consignment, having come seamlessly through customs free borders as part of the trial run under the Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) signed last year, reports Express News Service Tuesday.

The truck of Nazrul Transport Agency and Expo Freight Pvt. Ltd. from Bangladesh was dispatched from Dhaka on August 27 as part of a trial run under the BBIN agreement which is likely to facilitate cross border movement of both passenger and cargo vehicles in the sub-region.

"History was written at the Inland Customs Depot in Patparganj in East Delhi today when for the first time a cargo truck from Bangladesh drove in with a Delhi bound consignment, having come seamlessly through customs free borders," said an official of the transport ministry.

The trial run was organized to help develop the protocols for implementing the Agreement. The cargo vehicle started its journey from Dhaka and traversing through West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, UP, Haryana and Delhi travelling more than 1850 kms to reach the Custom Depot at Patparganj in New Delhi today. (Courtesy: The Financial Express dated September 07, 2016)

Trade gap with India drops again to \$4.76b in FY16

The country's trade gap with India in the recently concluded fiscal year declined to \$4.76 billion from \$5.28 billion in FY15 due to rise in export earnings against the fall in import payments.

The country's trade gap with India maintained the declining trend for the second fiscal year in a row as the trade deficit between Bangladesh and India stood at \$5.57 billion in FY14.

Experts and Bangladesh Bank officials, however, said that the country's trade gap with India was still high as different non-tariff barriers continued to limit Bangladesh's exports to the neighboring country.

Bangladesh's imports from India stood at US\$ 5.45 billion in the FY16 whereas exports stood at US\$ 689.62 million during the financial year.

The trade gap in FY15 was US\$ 5.28 billion with an

export figure of US\$ 527.16 million and import of US\$ 5.81 billion.

Export Promotion Bureau and the BB data showed that Bangladesh's trade gap with India recorded an all-time high in FY14.

A BB official told New Age on Monday that the trade gap with India decreased in the last two fiscal years as the country's export earnings from the neighboring country slightly increased while import decreased.

'Businesspeople have recently adopted a 'wait and see' approach to their business expansion by opening letters of credit for import due to political uncertainty and delicate situation in law and order. For this reason, imports from India decreased in FY16,' he said.

He said that although the export to India in FY15 increased to \$689.62 million from \$527.16 million in

FY15, the figure was still low compared to at least 10 other export destinations.

He, however, said that the trade deficit of Bangladesh against India was still high as different non-tariff barriers continued to limit Bangladesh's exports to the neighboring country.

'It is a natural phenomenon that Bangladesh usually faces a deficit with the neighbouring country considering the volume of India's economy. But it is not acceptable that the size of the deficit has been huge for years,' he said.

He said that the country's businesspeople mainly imported industrial raw materials and intermediary goods from India.

'The importers have no option to avoid the imports as such products are not produced in the country. So we have to try to increase the export volume to India to

reduce the trade deficit with the neighboring country,' he said.

Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh executive director Ahsan H Mansur told New Age on Monday that the country's huge trade gap with India was not a matter of concern.

He said, 'We have to import from India or other countries being a developing country. We should keep attention to increase the export earnings from India,' he said.

The country's export earnings from India have maintained a satisfactory level in the last two fiscal years, he said.

He, however, said that the government should take initiative to avoid the non-tariff barriers in different states of India which would boost the export volume of the country further. (Courtesy: New Age dated August 30, 2016)

India Education Fair- 2016



High Commissioner of India in Bangladesh Harsh Vardhan Shringla visits the stalls of 'India Education Fair- 2016' after inaugurating it at the Daily Star convention centre in Dhaka on Friday, July 29.

BIDA starts journey to boost investment, industrialisation

The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), a new entity constituted by abolishing the Board of Investment (BoI) and the Privatisation Commission (PC), started working on Thursday to boost private investment and industrialisation in the country, reports BSS.

"BIDA has started working formally from today and the new entity will run its activities from the existing office of BoI at Dilkusha Jibon Bima Bhaban and PC's Paribahan Pool Bhaban office until a new office is given to BIDA," Navas Chandra Mandal, member of former BoI, told the news agency.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the chairman of the 17-member governing board of the BIDA. Former secretary to Prime Minister's Office and former alternative executive director of the World Bank Kazi Md Aminul Islam has been made the first executive chairman of BIDA.

BIDA will now be able to privatize a public industry worth Tk 1.0 billion (100 crore) as per the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority Law, 2015. But industry or business entity with value worth over Tk 1.0 billion, BIDA has to take the matter to the cabinet committee on economic affairs. (Source: The Financial Express dated September 2, 2016)

Jharkhand plant to supply 1,600 MW to Bangladesh

An Indian expert panel finally cleared the terms of reference (ToR) for the 1,600 megawatt (MW) thermal power project of Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd in Jharkhand that will supply the entire electricity generated in the plant to Bangladesh.

The 1,600MW Godda thermal power project in Jharkhand is the result of an agreement between India and Bangladesh signed in January 2010 with a view to enhancing ties between the two countries through economic cooperation.

ToRs are guidelines for conducting environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies of projects, based on which the ministry of environment, forest and climate change grants or rejects green clearance to a project.

The agreement, signed by Adani Power and the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), is aimed at developing the thermal power plant and supplying the entire power generated to BPDB through a dedicated transmission line.

The Rs.13,906 crore project was, however, put on hold in May over environmental concerns such as inadequate information about the withdrawal of water from the nearby Chir river and the water use, said the Mint, an Indian daily business newspaper published from New Delhi, on Monday.

The panel's nod came after the necessary clarifications were provided to it by the company in a meeting on 14-15 July.

"After detailed deliberations, the committee recommended the following ToR in addition to the standard TORs (as applicable) for undertaking detailed EIA study and preparation of EMP (environmental management plan)," the Mint report quoted the minutes of the EAC meeting reviewed by Mint.

The total land requirement for the project is 860 acres, which includes 393 acres for the main plant, 203 acres for the green belt, 30 acres for the town and 234 acres for the ash dyke.

Of the total 860 acres, 737 acres are private land and the remaining 123 acres are government land. An additional area of 550 acres for a water reservoir will also be required.

On the EAC's query regarding the NGRBA approval, the panel noted that the water resources department of the Jharkhand government (in June 2016) has stated that the approval of the NGRBA has not been obtained because water is not to be drawn directly from the Ganga river.

The expert panel also pointed out to Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd that since February 2016, "this was the fourth time the proposal had been taken up for consideration" and "this delay in recommending TORs could have been easily avoided" if the information sought by them in the February meeting had been given expeditiously by Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd, said Mint. (Source: Daily Observer dated August 02, 2016)

Rise in cross-border trade to benefit businesses in South Asia: ADB

Small traders and producers of seasonal goods in South Asia would see more benefits of regional integration, after the bloc moved to enlarge the list of commodities that could be traded.

Customs officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka recently gathered in the Maldives in May to discuss ways to help companies and individuals do more cross-border business, faster and at less cost.

The officials agreed that more commodities will be added to the product list and the value of the cargo able to use export declarations will be reduced, according to a write-up posted on the website of the Asian Development Bank.

"This will benefit smaller-scale traders and producers of seasonal goods. And more border crossings will be able to exchange export declarations as well," the report said.

Allowing exporting country customs to exchange export declarations for commodities with the receiving importing country customs on a daily basis leads to

faster cross-verification of data such as declared value, quantity, classification, and so forth.

The countries had already agreed to allow exchange of export declarations for specific commodities with a value of \$15,000 or more at five border crossings.

The crossings are: Benapole, Bangladesh-Petrapole, India; Banglabandha, Bangladesh-Kakarbitta, Nepal; Panitanki, India-Kakarbitta; Phuentsholing, Bhutan-Burimari, Bangladesh; and Phuentsholing-Jaigaon, India.

"If both sides of a border accept documentation of each other it will cut both time and transaction cost and help trade facilitation," said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Additional Research Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) an expert on trade facilitation.

The economist also said if the value of the cargo able to use export declarations comes down, businesses on both sides of borders would benefit as they largely trade small amounts. Moazzem said all land ports linking Bangladesh and India should be allowed to trade more commodities and in small chunk.

South Asia is one of the most dynamic regions in the world, but it is also one of the least economically integrated ones.

Intra-regional trade accounts for just 5 percent of total trade, compared with 25 percent in the Association of Southeast Nations. The ADB report said it is clear that getting customs officials from the six countries of the SASEC programme together reaps benefits.

Another project of the SASEC Customs Subgroup has agreed that field-level customs officials should meet at least once in every six months to talk about and decide the next steps in improving cross-border coordination and cooperation.

"Boosting trade between the SASEC countries would

be a boon for all."

The ADB report said countries in the sub-region trade amongst each other much less than they trade with countries outside South Asia, and much less than countries within other sub-regions.

It takes an average 60 hours and costs \$345 to export a standard container in the region, and 112 hours and \$569 to import.

Time-consuming inspections and testing at borders delay cargo clearance, often meaning the loss of perishable goods like food and agricultural produce, and cause unnecessary congestion. The ADB report said there has been some progress too. (Courtesy: The Daily Star dated July 5, 2016)

BBIN Business Forum

July 14: A meeting of BBIN Business Forum was held on the day at the Lalit Great Eastern Hotel, Kolkata. IBCCI Vice-President Dewan Sultan Ahmed, former President of the Chamber Mohammad Ali and IBCCI Secretary & CEO Jahangir Bin Alam attended the meeting.

Top chambers of Commerce of the four countries have launched the BBIN Business Forum in Kolkata. The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI), the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and

Industry and the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) initiated the new forum.

Dr. Masihur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister of Bangladesh, and Dr. Gowher Rizvi, international affairs adviser, were also present at the event in Kolkata.

Despite its inception in early 1980s, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) has failed to generate desired level of trade activities in the member countries.

BBIN trade fair in Shiliguri



Abdul Matlub Ahmad, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, opens a three-day fair—BBIN Business Forum & Expo—at Shiliguri

A three-day trade fair—BBIN Business Forum & Expo—with participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal kicked off at Shiliguri in the Indian state of West Bengal on 15th July.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICC) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) jointly organised the event with an aim to boost regional trade among the four countries.

FBCCI President Abdul Matlub Ahmad opened the event in presence of business leaders from the four countries. Bangladeshi companies are showcasing their products in 20 stalls while those from Bhutan and India in 40 stalls. (Courtesy: The Daily Star; Dated 16th July, 2016)

Agartala-Akhaura rail link to boost Dhaka-Delhi trade: Livemint

Not only does the New Delhi-Agartala train service establish a direct link between New Delhi and the north-east it made Bangladesh—which provides the land bridge connecting the two parts of India—a direct stakeholder in India's Look East strategy, according to Indian newspaper.

There are other implications as well. For starters, it also melds well with India's plans to open links between the states in the northeast and South East Asia. India is already looking at plans to complete a road link from its northeast through Myanmar to Thailand.

Linking development of India's north-east with that

of Bangladesh has been something that has been on the Indian agenda for years. This is primarily because many of the insurgent groups active in the northeast have been using Bangladesh as a base.

"Development of the northeastern states mean ensuring jobs for the youth ...," said a government official.

"The situation in the region is improving with India opening trade points with Bangladesh and Myanmar as well as various connectivity projects linking the northeast to Delhi, within the region itself as well as neighbouring countries," said the official, according to Indian newspaper.

"More trade, greater the prosperity and lesser the chance of youth getting involved in militant activities. And trade with Bangladesh is a key part of this strategy," the official said.

Indian railways minister Suresh Prabhu said Sunday said the railways will invest more than Rs.70 billion in the current fiscal year to develop its network in the seven north-eastern states.

The Agartala-Akhaura rail link will be a key railway connection between the two countries. Akhaura in south eastern Bangladesh is an important railway

junction which connects Chittagong port, resource-rich Sylhet and Dhaka.

According to a second Indian official, "The Agartala Akhaura link will give full rail connectivity from east to west of Bangladesh and will greatly facilitate India-Bangladesh trade and people to people ties."

"It is also expected to facilitate transit from Chittagong and Mongla ports to Tripura and India's northeast," the official said. In other words, Indian ships could dock in Chittagong port and use the rail link to access India's north-east.

"This is a win-win situation for both countries. It will help increased trade between India and the seven states of the northeast that will bring with it prosperity for the region. Bangladesh is also looking at development, jobs for its people. Their goals as similar to ours and that is why this will benefit both sides," another official said.

India already has bus links connecting Dhaka and Kolkata and Agartala and Dhaka. There is also a train link between Dhaka and Kolkata. When the Agartala-Akhaura link becomes operational, it could potentially provide connectivity all the way to New Delhi. (Courtesy: *The Financial Express* dated August 3, 2016)

Lorry departs for Delhi

BBIN MVA takes another test run

A cargo vehicle began on Saturday night a nearly 4000-kilometre journey from Dhaka to Delhi with readymade garments to test seamless movement of freights among four nations.

The long-haul cargo trip under the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicle agreement (MVA) was flagged off from Motijheel depot of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) to reach its destination in 14 days.

Official sources said the 14-day-long trial cargo-transport run on Dhaka-Delhi-Dhaka route is expected to end in the second week of September.

A seven-tonne covered van, designed for the inaugural trip, will move along Dhaka-Aricha-Jessore-Benapole-Petrapole-Kolkata-Jharkhand-Bihar-Uttar Pradesh-Delhi route.

The vehicle will cross the borders at Benapole on Bangladesh side and Petrapole on the Indian side Monday after completing customs and immigration formalities.

Both cost and time are expected to be reduced after the successful run of the cargo vehicles. (Courtesy: *The Financial Express*; Dated: 28th August, 2016)

BAPEX invited to Develop already discovered small oil, gas fields in India

State-run Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company, better known as Bapex, has been invited to bid for development and production from already discovered small oil and gas fields in India.

In a letter of invitation, managing director and chief executive officer of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh Limited said that the government of India had offered 67 small discovered fields with an objective of monetising the discovered fields to boost domestic oil and gas production.

These fields are clustered and are being offered in

46 contract areas, both onshore and offshore, spread across nine sedimentary basins, it said.

The ONGC Videsh letter said that the bidding would take place under the 'Discovered Small Field Bid Round 2016.'

Bapex managing director Md Atiquzzaman said that the invitation from India's state-run ONGC Videsh was under examination.

Replying to a question, he told New Age that Bapex might take part in bidding under joint venture with ONGC Videsh.

Ifad to start auto assembly in September

Ifad Autos, which is building the country's largest auto assembly plant at Tk 90 crore, is expected to roll out its first vehicle in September.



Initially, the plant aimed to assemble 4,000 trucks and buses a year, but revised the annual target higher at 7,000 vehicles, buoyed by the growth of the local market.

"We expect to launch our first product in September this year," said Taskeen Ahmed, managing director of Ifad Autos, a unit of Ifad Group that has presence

from fast-moving consumer goods to agro-products and chemicals.

Primarily, the plant will assemble heavy buses and trucks of Ashok Leyland, a leading Indian automobile manufacturer.

Ifad, which was previously Ashok Leyland's sole distributor in Bangladesh for about three decades, is now its strategic partner in the country.

Ifad provides a full line of heavy duty trucks, buses and special service vehicles from Ashok Leyland of India.

Ashok Leyland is concentrated on heavy buses and trucks. It has presence in the entire truck range, starting from 7.5 tonnes to 49 tonnes.

Recently, the company has tied up with Nissan Motors of Japan to make light commercial vehicles or LCVs of less than 7.5 tonnes.

"We will also assemble and sell LCVs here," said Ahmed, who is also the president of the India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

With the consistent economic growth of over 6 percent for the last one decade, Bangladesh is becoming an emerging market for the transport sector.

About 12,000 trucks of 3.5 tonnes to 7 tonnes are sold a year in Bangladesh, according to industry insiders. (Courtesy: The Daily Star; Dated: 25th July, 2016)

Dhaka, Delhi plan to enhance regional power trade

Dhaka, Delhi plan to enhance regional power trade Bangladesh and India are working to enhance existing power transmission capabilities between the two countries and also to set transmission lines with Nepal and Bhutan to initiate a regional trade on electricity.

The plans are also aimed at to transmit electricity to the power starved regions as the power generation capacities are on rise in both Bangladesh and India, experts and entrepreneurs engaged in the regional power trade said.

They said after turning power-surplus, India is working with Bangladesh on a plan to double the capacity of existing transmission interconnects and set up a third link for increasing cross-border electricity trade in a bid to widen the regional market as new generation capacities come up on both sides.

Sources said the two sides are working to double the capacity of the Baharmapur-Bheramara line to 1,000 mw and also examine the possibility of raising the Tripura-Comilla line's capacity to 200 mw.

Also on the table is a proposal to lay a third line from Assam's Bongaigaon to a suitable interconnect point in Bihar through Bangladesh, TNN of The Times of India said in a report on Monday.

Though the proposal is at a nascent stage, sources said a HVDC (high-voltage, direct current) line with a capacity of around 2,000 mw is being looked at, TMM said.

The new line is expected to wheel power from hydel projects proposed to be built in the northeast, some of which can also be shared with Bangladesh. This line would allow an easy tap-in or tap-off facility for both countries to feed -or plug into -each other's markets.

According to the Asian Development Bank, interconnected networks increase the operational efficiency and reliability of existing national grids and encourage the development of new renewable power resources.

Besides Bangladesh, India also exports power to Nepal and imports from Bhutan. A wider regional market with easy export and import options will help balance the output swing from the 175 mw of solar power capacity being pursued by India.

According to TNN the talks for enhanced interconnect capacity are well-timed with developments on the ground as power generation grew at more than 9 per cent in the April-June 2016 period against the same period of 2015. (Courtesy: Daily Observer dated July 19, 2016)

IBTF 2017

September 04: IBCCI is going to organise the 4th Indo-Bangla Trade Fair on February 16-18, 2017 at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. For the purpose the Chamber signed an MOU on the day with Extreme Exhibition & Event Solution Ltd. (E3 Solutions) for organising the event as the event managers

IBCCI President, Taskeen Ahmed and E3 Solutions Managing Director, Chanmohan Saha signed the agreement on behalf respective organisations.



IBCCI President, Taskeen Ahmed signing the MOU on behalf of the Chamber

North East Connectivity Summit of FICCI

IBCCI participated in a 2-day North East Connectivity Summit 2016 (Connect North East) organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on September 22-23 preceded by a pre-summit conclave on 21st September at Pragya Bhaban, Agartala, Tripura.

At the invitation of the organisers, a four member Chamber team headed by IBCCI Secretary & CEO Jahangir Bin Alam participated in the summit. Other members of the team were – K. B. Ahmed, Managing Director of IBCCI Member Company Mohona Holdings Ltd.; Rashed Mahmud, Managing Director of Dipon Infrastructure Services Limited and GSM Shamsuzzoha, Head of Business Development of the same member company.



Chamber Secretary spoke on "Enhancing People to People Connectivity" in one of the plenary sessions.

Member company UMCH profile

The Universal Medical College & Hospital Ltd. (UMCH) is one of the fastest and rapidly growing general hospitals in Bangladesh located at the heart of Dhaka city Mohakhali (Near Rail Gate). It was established in the year of 1996 and subsequently acquired by the current owners in 2004 with a view to providing best quality health care services to all strata of our society. It has a long history of excellent care and innovation assisted by highly professional national and international health care experts and workers equipped with latest medical technologies to cater to the needs of national and international patients.

Universal Medical College & Hospital Ltd (Former Aysha Memorial Specialized Hospital (Pvt.) Ltd.) has turned out to be one of the most rapidly growing multi-disciplinary super-specialty tertiary care hospitals in Bangladesh.

It is a 350 bedded specialized hospital (Proposed 750 beds) working with a single motto of bringing smile to everyone's face. It is committed to ensuring better healthcare of the people at an affordable cost.

In its 15 years existence, UMCH expended its wings to cardio care with the establishment of a Cardiac Centre with state-of-Arts facilities.

Recently it has expanded its horizon from being a specialized hospital to a Medical College and Hospital and a nursing institute.

Under the dynamic leadership of the visionary chairperson Mrs. Priti Chakraborty, dedicated and dedicated board of directors UMCH has made its mark in the country's health care sector.

The Hospital is providing the most modern and updated services in the country for both in and outpatients. It has 24x7 emergency services, ultra-modern diagnostic facility, kidney dialysis, ambulance services, lab facility and food services. Its diagnostic facility includes MRI, CT-Scan, Mammography, BMD, ETT and critical care units like - ICU, NICU/PICU, HDU, Surgery such as General & Laparoscopic Surgery, Breast & Colorectal Surgery, Neuro surgery, paediatric, gynae and obstetrics.

Inter-ministerial meeting on security for foreigners

August 16: An inter-ministerial meeting on ensuring security to foreigners in general and foreign investors /business people in Bangladesh in particular was held

at the Ministry of Commerce with Senior Secretary of the ministry in the Chair. IBCCI was represented in the meeting by its Secretary & CEO, Jahangir Bin Alam.

New IBCCI Vice-President

Mr. Jyotibrata Banerjee, Managing Director of CEAT AKKHan Ltd. who is one of the elected members of IBCCI Board and was holding the position of Honorary Secretary General of the Chamber until recently has been elected as the new Vice President of the Chamber in place of Mr. Aditya Ajit Kumar Shome

who earlier resigned from his position in the Chamber Board from as he left IBCCI member company, Marico Bangladesh.



Mr. Jyotibrata Banerjee

Visitors to the Chamber



July 11: Ranjan Shukla, Country Head – Bangladesh of SSA Business Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai, India visited the Chamber on the day and discussed matters relating to his company's business promotion in Bangladesh.



August 31: Amin Sulaiman, Director of Trade Link Group, Sarjah, UAE visited the Chamber on the day and discussed matters relating to import of jute goods from Bangladesh through his subsidiary companies in India.



September 28: Utpal Roy, Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCC&I) visited the Chamber on the day and exchanged views with IBCCI Secretary & CEO, Jahangir Bin Alam on matters relating to IBCCI's participation in the forth coming "Mega International Trade Fair 2016 - 17 in Kolkata, Bhubaneshwar & Ranchi.

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