



Abdul Matlub Ahmad

From the President's Desk

Bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India are at all time high thanks to the strong political will and commitments of both the governments. According to a recent remark of the High Commissioner of India Smt. Riva Ganguly Das - "Both our two countries are passing through a Golden Era." This has been possible due to dynamic leadership of both Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi in spite of occasional bureaucratic stasis.

Rail, Waterways and air connectivity have improved a lot during the last decade or so. There has been remarkable progress in rail and waterways connectivity during the period. Although the balance of trade still remains negative for Bangladesh. Truly speaking, such imbalance will remain so for obvious reasons. If Bangladesh desires to narrow the gap, all out efforts need to be undertaken towards diversification of its export basket by finding new exportable products..

For this to happen Bangladeshi exporters must opt for aggressing marketing to promote their products which their Indian counter parts are now practicing. Government also should do its bits in helping local exporters by way of offering incentives and organizing trade fairs in various regions of India as the government of India is doing.

Volume of trade between the two improved significantly in recent times crossing US\$ 10 billion mark in the last couple of years and Bangladesh's exports to India have reached 1.7 billion dollar mark. This is remarkable.

IBCCI has been advocating for more Indian investment in Bangladesh taking advantage of tax benefits that the country gets for its exports to EU and Canada.

Adani Groups investment plans in Bangladesh to the tune of \$ 350 million in association with Singapore based Wilmar for developing industrial parks and setting up manufacturing facilities. Such industrial expanse will help bring down trade imbalance between the two countries.

'Bangladesh to have highest growth in Asia'

American business magazine Forbes has stated through an analysis that Bangladesh will gain the highest economic growth in Asia during 2020.

According to Forbes, Bangladesh will have a GDP growth of 8% or above in 2020 by means of foreign investments, low labor cost, readymade garments (RMG) and some other industries. Forbes said that Bangladesh has been able to attract a great deal of foreign investments for its textile and RMG sectors as labor cost is cheap in the country.

Forbes has reported that India will have the second highest growth in Asia during 2020 which is 7.2%. According to Forbes, India aims to produce and export a broad range of electronic goods this year.

Tajikistan will also do well in economic terms in light of the analysis of Forbes with a GDP growth of 7%. Tajikistan acquired GDP growth of 7.1% and 7.3% in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Forbes has informed that Myanmar is likely to have a GDP growth of 6.8% in 2020. Myanmar had been under military rule for a long time.

The analysis of Forbes shows that some economic reforms in Myanmar are expediting its development. However, economists have remarked that political commitment and more private investments are required for Bangladesh to reach the desired level of socio-economic advancement. (Courtesy: The Asian Age; Dated: 7th January, 2020)

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Bangladesh to outshine Malaysia, Singapore, HK by 2024

Bangladesh to emerge as 25th largest economy in 2034: CEBR

Bangladesh's economy will surpass that of Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore with its presence as the 30th largest economy in the world by 2024, says a global report released by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr), reports UNB.

Bangladesh's economy will further climb from the 40th place in the World Economic League Table in 2020 to 26th and 25th position respectively by 2029 and 2034, says the report - World Economic League Table 2020.

The world economic league table with forecasts for 193 countries to 2034 was published recently.

With a PPP adjusted GDP per capita of \$5,028 in 2019, Bangladesh is a lower middle-income country, Cebr says.

Bangladesh's economy performed well last year, recording a 7.8 per cent growth, according to the report. The country recorded 7.9 per cent growth in 2018.

The population increased at a rate of 1.0 per cent per year since 2014. This has meant that per capita incomes have grown considerably in recent years. The government debt as a share of GDP rose to 34.6 per cent last year. This is up from 34 percent in 2018.

Despite this increase, the public sector finances remain in good shape. The relatively low debt burden has provided the government with the fiscal headroom to operate a budget deficit of 4.8 percent

in 2019.

The annual rate of GDP growth is forecast to slow to an average of 7.3 percent between 2020 and 2025, according to the report.

Over the subsequent nine years, Cebr forecasts that the economy will remain at this impressive rate, which will see Bangladesh climb from 40th place in the World Economic League Table in 2020 to 25th place by 2034.

China is predicted to become the world's largest economy in 2033, overtaking the US with growth boosted by technology. India, on the other hand, is predicted to overtake Germany to become the world's fourth largest economy in 2026 and overtake Japan to become the world's third largest economy in 2034.

China's population is forecast to peak at 1,416.4 million in 2028 before falling to about 1 billion by 2100.

In addition, this demography means that the population is likely to age substantially as well. India's population is expected to overtake China's in 2027, according to the UN. The report says they expect the trend rate of growth for China to be 5.4 per cent annually from 2019-24 and 5.2 per cent annually from 2024-29 and 4.3 per cent annually from 2029-34.

On India, they expect the trend rate of growth for India to be 5.5 percent annually from 2019-24 and 6.1 percent annually from 2024-29 and 6.1 percent annually from 2029-34. (Courtesy: The Financial Express, 4th January 2020)

India expects to finalize deals on 7 rivers in 2020 : Shringla

Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla speaking at a seminar on "Bangladesh and India : A Promising Future" organized jointly by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and the High Commission of India in Dhaka on 2nd March, said "India expects to finalize proposed deals with Bangladesh on seven common rivers, excepting the Teesta, within 2020".

"NRC, CAA will have no impact on Bangladesh; Modi's Dhaka visit would fully exemplify India's strong sentiment of goodwill", Mr. Shringla added.

"We need to expedite harmonization of water flow data of seven rivers flowing through India and Bangladesh so that water sharing agreement can be finalized as early as possible... possibly within this year," he further said

It may be noted that in August last, Bangladesh and India agreed on preparing a framework on interim water-sharing agreements on seven rivers — Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla, Feni and Dudhkumar. He, however, appeared to be uncertain about the deal on Teesta River saying an agreement on water sharing

of this particular stream could only be finalized on the basis of consensus of all the stakeholders, an apparent reference to India's West Bengal state.

Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr



Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla addresses a seminar on Bangladesh-India relations in Dhaka on Monday, March 2

Gawher Rizvi attended the program as the chief guest.

Shringla said they are also working more closely



Abdul Matlub Ahmad, President IBCCI presenting Chamber Crest to Mr. Shringla

to simplify and expand trade as easier and simpler trading systems offer them scope to generate wealth and create jobs on both sides.

He said there is enormous untapped potential for businesses to establish footholds in each other's market. "And we, as governments, must make extra efforts facilitate our businesspersons and entrepreneurs doing business in each other's country."

In a sideline of the event, President of India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry Abdul Matlub Ahmad had a short discussion with Shringla on the current state of bilateral relations between the two countries and presented a Chamber Crest to him. (Courtesy: Dhaka Tribune; Dated: March 03, 2020)

Shringla meets PM Hasina

Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday at her official residence Ganobhaban, reports UNB.

Briefing the media, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the upcoming Bangladesh visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sub-regional connectivity and various bilateral issues were discussed.

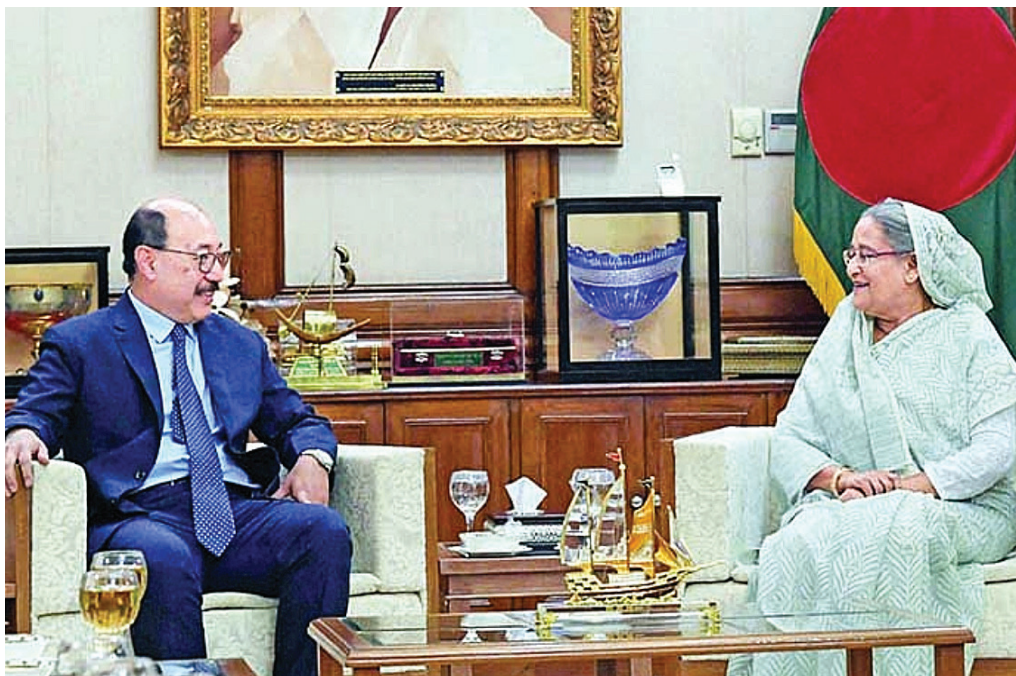
Modi is scheduled to come to Bangladesh on March 17 to join the birth centenary celebration of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Sheikh Hasina briefly described various programmes that have been taken to celebrate 'Mujib Borsho' (Mujib Year).

The press secretary said both sides also discussed the coronavirus. Prime Minister Hasina said that Bangladesh already dedicated a hospital for coronavirus patients. Anyone found to be infected will be sent to that hospital.

Harsh Vardhan Shringla praised the economic development of Bangladesh and the readymade garments industry of the country.

PM's Principal Secretary Dr Ahmad Kaikaus, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Muhammad Imran and Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das were also present. (Source: The Financial Express, 3rd March, 2020)



Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban

Record 15 lakh Indian visas to BD citizens in 2019

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das on Tuesday, December 2019 said 15 lakh Indian visas were issued to Bangladeshi people in the year of 2019, which is a record for India.

She came up with the information after presenting five-year multiple visas to three freedom fighters at Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) in Dhaka.

IVAC and Indian High Commission in Dhaka arranged the program to celebrate the mega numbers of visa issuance. The High Commissioner said, "At present, Indian visa-issuing system has been improved and become easier. Normally, 7-8 lakh Bangladeshi citizens would have Indian visa in the past years. But, this year, 15 lakh visas have been issued due to its easy system."

"It is necessary for the two countries to maintain people-to-people contact. India has opened 15 visa centers across Bangladesh. We are happy that Bangladeshi people are now easily getting Indian visas." The Indian envoy also said, from now, travelling to Sikkim has been opened for Bangladeshis. As a result, Bangladeshi tourists can enjoy the beauty of Himalayas.

Smoother bus and train communications between the two countries will increase number of Bangladeshi tourists to Sikkim, she hoped. Mentioning that the number of Bangladeshi tourists is increasing every year in India, Riva Ganguly said many people go India for shopping during Eids and marriage ceremony, many go for business, many go for treatment, education and travel purpose. A lot of visa application is being submitted to the Indian visa centers daily.

Earlier, Riva Ganguly Das handed over the landmark visa (Visa no: 15,00,000, 15,00,001, and 15,00,002) with passport to three freedom fighters. They are: Dr Nur Mohammad Mallik, Dr Shafiqul Islam and Md. Atiur Rahman. Atiur Rahman told this correspondent that he is very happy for getting a five-year multiple Indian visa. "I am grateful to Indian High Commission for providing me the visa," he added.



Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das with three freedom fighters who have got five-year multiple Indian visas

Bangladesh and India will cooperate with each other to commemorate the upcoming anniversaries of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 2020; 50 years of Bangladesh's War of Liberation; and the establishment of India-Bangladesh bilateral diplomatic ties in 2021. (Courtesy: The Asian Age; Dated: 1st January, 2020)

Seminar on Enhancing Indo-Bangla Bilateral Trade in light of Indian National Budget 2020

February 25: A seminar on "Enhancing Indo-Bangla Bilateral Trade in Light of Indian National Budget" organized jointly by High Commission of India and India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry was held on the day at The Westin Hotel, Dhaka.

High Commission of India (HCI), Dhaka in collaboration with India Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (IBCCI) jointly organized a seminar on the theme "Scope of enhancing Indo-Bangla Bilateral Trade in light of Indian National Budget 2020" at Hotel Westin, Dhaka on 25th February 2020.

The event saw large participation from various Chambers of Commerce & Industry, think-tanks and business heads of multinational companies based in Bangladesh. The program set off with the



Dr. Prakash Chandra Saboo, Country Head, State Bangof India making the keynote presentation at the seminar

welcome speech by the Hon' ble High Commissioner of India, Smt. Riva Ganguly Das. In her welcome

speech, the High Commissioner said "today's event on the Indian Budget 2020-21, will open up more business and trade opportunities between India and Bangladesh and I am certain, it will act as an useful platform for encouraging productive discussions". Deputy High Commissioner Shri Bishwadip Dey, in his interaction with the business magnets of Bangladesh mentioned that the India-Bangladesh proximity is an opportunity waiting to be explored and we should strive to tap the full potential of this mutually beneficial partnership.

The event also saw a presentation by Dr. Pramyesh Basall, Commercial Representative of the HCI, Dhaka on 'Promoting Indo-Bangla Trade and Commerce' wherein he covered the new vistas of engagement and increasing trade and commerce between the two neighboring nations. Ms. Anita Barik, Railway Advisor, HCI, Dhaka made a presentation on ongoing Connectivity Projects between India and Bangladesh.

Dr Prakash Chand Saboo, Country Head of State Bank of India spoke on the provisions of the Indian

National Budget 2020 which will boost the India-Bangladesh trade for the Financial Year 2020-2021.

Mr. Abdul Matlub Ahmed, President, India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce in his interaction covered wide areas of trade, business and connectivity between Bangladesh and India. He further said "India and Bangladesh has crossed USD 10 billion mark in 2019 and as the voice of industry, IBCCI will further strive for increasing the trade figures specially exports from Bangladesh and investment from India for the year 2020.

The event also saw engaging presentations by Mr Ashish Goupal, Managing Director , Marico Bangladesh Ltd on the topic "Bangladesh –The New Asian Tiger in the Making" where he spoke on salient features of Bangladesh economy and explained why Bangladesh has become international focus of trade and economic growth, while Mr. Robin Kumar Das, Country Head, Mahindra & Mahindra shared his excellent experience of doing business in Bangladesh for the past few years.

Indian Defense Equipment seminar held

A seminar on Indian Defense Equipment (SIDE 2020) was held at Hotel Radisson Blu on 27th February..

Indian High Commission to Bangladesh organized the program. Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun was the chief guest.



He paid tribute to Bangbandhu and said that the father of the nation had emphasized on building disciplined and professional Armed Forces. He also said that Bangladesh is the fastest growing economy in South Asia and is making rapid progress in industrialization.

Speaking on the occasion Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Riva Ganguly Das said that India and Bangladesh have close cooperation in many diverse areas and therefore are natural partners to pursue further cooperation in the field of defense technologies. Representatives from twelve different Indian Firms participated in the event.

Bangladesh security forces have earned a name for themselves as disciplined and professional force and the seminar provided an opportunity for defense manufacturers from India in developing fruitful partnerships with them. (Courtesy: The Asian Age; Dated: February 21, 2020)

Trial transshipment thru Akhaura likely after two months

CHATTOGRAM, Feb 15: The trial transshipment between Bangladesh and India is likely to be started after two months, sources said.

Chattogram Port and Kolkata Port Trust (KPT) are being readied to this effect.

Primarily, transshipment containers and cargoes will be transported to the neighbouring nation through Akhaura land port.

Direct shipment will be made after work on Moitri Bridge across the trans-border Feni river is completed.

Meanwhile, 70 works of the Moitri Bridge on river Feni is already been completed, sources added.

The distance of Kolkata from Chattogram port is 400 kilometres while that of Agartala is only 200 kilometres by sea route.

Both Bangladesh and India agreed on transshipment

in 2011 last. Later in 2015, the two governments signed a memorandum of understanding.

Sources said KPT chairman Binit Kumar visited Tripura and observed the preparation for transshipment last week.

He also met with Tripura chief minister Biplob Kumar Dev in this regard.

After holding a meeting, Mr Kumar told local journalists on Tuesday that trial transshipment is likely to be started within two or three months.

Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) chairman Rear Admiral Zulfikar Aziz said, "Chattogram seaport has increased its capacity in recent years. Now, we're ready for transshipment with India.

"If the government decides on transshipment with India, we can manage now."

The priority of the berthing of ships will depend on the agreement between Bangladesh and India, Mr Aziz mentioned.

"I hope trial transshipment will be started soon. But regular transshipment will depend on the supply of cargoes by exporters and importers."

"In that case, the government will fix up the tariff for handling of cargoes and containers," he continued.

"The CPA will handle transshipment containers and cargoes. We'll fix a yard or terminal for containers and cargoes. Later, lorries will carry the goods."

CPA secretary Omar Faruk said, "We're communicating with the authorities concerned, including KPT, on a regular basis for trial transshipment."

It is to be noted that the CPA handled more than 2.6 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) containers (20 feet long) in 2017. In 2018, it increased by 9.0 per cent.

The country's premier seaport handled 2.9 million TEU containers (20 feet long) in 2018.

Besides, the CPA had handled more than 3.0 million TEUS containers from January to December in 2019. (Courtesy: Financial Express, 16th February 2020)

Dhaka-Siliguri train service from June, says minister

PANCHAGARH, Feb 14 (UNB): Railways Minister Md Nurul Islam Sujan on Friday said direct train service on Dhaka-Siliguri route will begin in June after installation of the Chilahati-Haldibari rail track.

"It'll be completed by June and Dhaka-Siliguri train service will be launched immediately after that," he said while distributing donations among the poor at Moidandighi in Boda upazila.

Currently, two trains - Maitree Express on Dhaka-

Kolkata route and Bandhan Express on Khulna-Kolkata route - are being operated between Bangladesh and India.

The government has long been working to ensure stronger rail communication inside the country and with neighbouring India.

Minister Sujan revealed that the government is all set to inaugurate construction of Bangabandhu Railway Bridge on the Jamuna River on March 14. (Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: February 15, 2020)

Adani Group to kick start India specific Special Economic Zone

Indian corporate giant Adani Group is likely to start the site development work of the India Special Economic Zone (ISEZ) by this June, where billions of dollars of investment are expected to pour in from the neighboring country.

The ISEZ, which will be set up on 1,000 acres of land, will be exclusively for Indian investors.

Site selection and land acquisition for ISEZ have already been completed at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMSN) in Mirsarai, Chattogram.

Now negotiation is going on whether the Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) will be involved in equity or not.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given her nod to the Ahmedabad-based Adani Group to develop the ISEZ, according to Paban Chowdhury, executive

chairman of Beza.

Chowdhury believes successful implementation of the ISEZ would eventually reduce the trade imbalance

Total area of ISEZ	1,000 acres
Investment	billions of dollar
Employment generation	3 lakh
Major sector	IT, automobile, textile, engineering, leather
Important infrastructure	jetty/port

between the two countries that is heavily tilted towards the neighbouring country.

In fiscal 2018-19, Bangladesh's merchandise shipments to India were \$1.24 billion, crossing the \$1 billion-mark for the first time, according to data from the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

At the same time, Bangladesh imported goods worth \$7.64 billion, down from \$8.61 billion in the previous year.

An Indian diplomat in Dhaka told The Daily Star upon condition of anonymity that the Narendra Modi-led government is keen to start operations in the zone as soon as possible.

"Our investors, including giant Adani Group, are eagerly waiting to set up their industrial units in the economic zones," he added.

A delegate of Adani Group -- whose concerns include energy, resources, logistics, agribusiness, real estate, financial services, defense and aerospace -- visited the site at BSMSN last week for final assessment.

Adani is eyeing the ISEZ as there is Indian government

support.

The Indian government will provide \$278 million in financial support under its third Line of Credit (LoC) worth \$4.5 billion to Bangladesh. Disbursement of funds from the third LoC, which was agreed upon in 2017, is yet to start.

"But seeing the urgency in Adani to get the project off the ground, it may not utilise the funds from LoC in the end to sidestep bureaucracy complexity."

Adani, which has vast experience as India's largest private multi-port operator, wants to set up a dedicated port in the zone, Chowdhury said.

Besides, the group, whose annual turnover is upwards of \$13 billion, has a plan to invest \$350 million in Bangladesh to establish an industrial park in the zone under a joint venture with Singapore-based Wilmar, a manufacturer of agro-based foods and allied products.

The economic zones aim to promote balanced development of multi-product industries in different parts of the country, create jobs for the locals and attract foreign direct investment, he added. (Courtesy: The Daily Star; Dated: February 11, 2020)

Akhaura-Agartala rail link by June 2021

Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Riva Ganguly Das has said that the rail communication between Bangladesh's Akhaura and Agartala of India will be completed by June next year.

She said this while visiting the construction work of the rail line in Akhaura of Brahmanbaria on Thursday morning. Expressing satisfaction at the progress of the construction work, India envoy said, "We are regularly monitoring the work.

The project will be completed in time." First Secretary

(Railways Adviser) of Indian High Commission Anita Barik, Akhaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer Tahmina Akter Reina, Officer-in-Charge Rosul Ahmed Nizami were also present, among others.

It is mentionable that the 15-kilometre Akhaura-Agartala rail project will cost Tk 477 crore. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi inaugurated the project through video conference on September 10, 2018. (Courtesy: The Asian Age; Dated: February 14, 2020)



Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das visiting the construction work of the Akhaura-Agartala rail line in Akhaura of Brahmanbaria on Thursday. -AA

Europe-bound shipping route via Chennai round the corner

A Chattogram-Europe shipping route via Chennai is set to be launched by the middle of February, adding a new chapter to the country's sea-borne trade.

This will help slash shipping times for Bangladesh-made goods, people familiar with the development said. Higher lead time is considered a key constraint to conducting foreign trade smoothly.

Officials serving with international shipping firms said this is a great step towards expediting imports from India, the nation's second-largest trading partner.

A senior executive at the Tradewind Logistics Limited, local agent of Hyderabad-based Vishwa Samudra Shipment Services Private Limited, told the FE, "Our first vessel is expected to reach by February 15 with industrial raw materials and other commodities from India."

He said the company has already obtained permission from the Chittagong Port Authority.

Vishwa Samudra is an Indian private feeder service company, which will connect Chittagong with Chennai-based Krishnapatnam Port, popularly known as KPCL.

The KPCL wants to promote the route to grab market shares from the Chattogram-Singapore-Colombo way.

He said Indian-made goods now take much time in some cases six days to reach the Chittagong port as it has to go to Colombo before sailing towards Bangladesh.

The executive said: "Local importers can save both time and money by using the new route." Currently, Chattogram-Colombo, Chattogram-Singapore and Chattogram-Port Klang lines connect Europe and America through shipping vessels.

KPCL is a privately-owned all-weather, deep-water port on the east coast of India, located in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. It is located about 190 kilometres north of Chennai Port and 18 kilometres east of the city of Nellore.

The port is owned and operated by KPCL which is 92 per cent owned by the Hyderabad-based CVR Group.

The London-based equity firm 3i Group Plc owns the remaining 8.0 per cent equity in KPCL. The KPCL wanted to launch the route in November 2019. *(Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: 26th January, 2020)*

Indo-Bangla rail trips rise next week

The two cross-border intercity express trains between Bangladesh and India will run a day more in a week as the services start from February 11 and 16.

Maitree Express that plies Dhaka-Kolkata route four days a week will now be operated five days a week, said a press release from the Indian High Commission on Tuesday.

Bandhan Express that runs between Kolkata and Khulna will now be operated twice a week instead of a single day.

The additional service of Maitree Express will be commenced from Dhaka on February 11 and that from Kolkata on February 12.

Maitree runs on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from Dhaka and Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday from Kolkata, according to the statement.

The additional trip will be made on Tuesday from Dhaka and Wednesday from Kolkata.

The extra trip of Bandhan Express will be started from Kolkata on February 16 and that from Khulna the same day.

Presently, the cross-border train runs on Thursday only.

The decision to increase the frequency of the two commuter train movement was made to enhance people-to-people contacts, it added.

According to the Bangladesh Railway (BR), since the launch of Maitree Express in 2008, two trains used to run between Dhaka and Kolkata a week.

With the popularity of the service that was launched 40 years after its suspension, the number of trips increased to four and the train was fully air-conditioned in April 2017.

BR sources said the train runs with full seating capacity.

Bandhan has been in operation since November 2017 *(Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: February 05, 2020)*

Indian builder to build 51km four-lane road

An Indian company has been selected to accomplish the four-lane work on a 51-kilometre road that would

connect Ashuganj river port with Akhaura land port.

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) inked

on Thursday a deal with Afcons Infrastructure Ltd to work on the Tk 24.46-billion project under two packages.

It also signed a separate contract with an India-Bangladesh joint-venture firm for project management consultancy service at Tk 117.65 crore.

The consultants are RITES Ltd, an Indian government enterprise, and Modern Engineers Planners and Consultants Ltd of Bangladesh.

Project director Arun Alo Chakma and officials of the two companies signed contracts on behalf of their respective sides at a city hotel.

Both the contracts were witnessed by roads transport and bridges minister Obaidul Quader.

Indian high commissioner in Dhaka Riva Ganguly Das was also present.

The RHD got the approval of the Tk 35.67-billion project from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council in July 2017.

Sixty-four per cent of the project costs would come from an Indian second line of credit signed in March 2016.

Mr Quader laid great stress on the completion of the project in time with quality to improve connectivity with neighbouring countries.

Ms Ganguly said India has extended \$8-billion credit to various socio-economic and infrastructural projects in Bangladesh.

Forty-six projects have been identified for the credit which would improve connectivity within and outside the country, she added. *(Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: 24th January, 2020)*

Bangladesh exports ships to India

Two more cargo ships made in Bangladesh have been exported to India. Western Marine Shipyard Limited handed over the ships -- JSW Lohagarh and JSW Sinhgad -- to Jindal Steel Works (JSW) in Chattogram (Chittagong) on 10th January.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi was present as the chief guest at the program while Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das was present as special guest. In March, 2015, JSW gave Western Marine Shipyard work orders for building four ships of 8000DWT capacity.

The contract price for each vessel is USD 6,215,000 (total value of four ships: USD 24,860,000). The first

pair -- JSW Raigad and JSW Pratapgad -- was handed over in October 2017. The deal is known to be the highest value contract between India and Bangladesh in private sector.

Jindal, the largest steel producer in India, will operate these vessels in Maharashtra State Coastal run, also known as the west coast of India. The vessels will carry iron ore and coal from Jaigarh Port (located between Mumbai and Goa) to Dharamtar Port.

Western Marine Chairman Saiful Islam, Rear Admiral Abu Ashraf, Bank Asia DMD SM Iqbal and Western Marine Managing Director Captain Soheli Hasan were also present at the function, among others. *(Courtesy: The Asian Age; Dated: 11th January, 2020)*



Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das were at a ceremony marking the handing over of two cargo ships manufactured in Bangladesh to India's Jindal Steel Works in Chattogram (Chittagong)

Bangladesh starts exporting LPG to Indian state of Tripura

Bangladesh has started commercial export of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to neighbouring India with initial shipment of around 1,000 tonnes per month.

Two privately owned firms -- Omera Petroleum and Beximco LPG -- are now exporting LPG to Tripura, a landlocked northeastern state of India, by road.

Presently, each of the firms is exporting around 500 tonnes a month, and the volume may climb to around 2,500 tonnes within several months.

"We have started commercial export of LPG to India a couple of weeks ago after carrying out several test runs with a volume of several hundred tonnes," chief executive officer (CEO) of Omera Petroleum Ltd. Shamsul Haque Ahmed told the FE.

The state-run Indian Oil Corporation, or IOC, is importing the LPG under a deal signed between Bangladesh and India on October 5, 2019 in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi during her visit to India.

The LPG-carrying tankers are shipping the fuel to Bishalgarh of Tripura through Bibirbazar land border point in Cumilla district.

After bottling the gas at its Bishalgarh bottling plant, the IOC will supply the product to consumers, especially for cooking purpose.

"The opportunity to export LPG has opened up a new consumer market for Bangladeshi LPG firms," deputy secretary of energy and mineral resources division (EMRD) Akramuzzaman told the FE on Sunday.

It will help boost the country's export earnings as well, said Mr Akramuzzaman, who has been dealing with LPG issues at the energy ministry.

When asked, the CEO of Omera Petroleum, however, avoided an answer to question on the rate of profit to be earned through export of LPG to India.

Omera and Beximco, however, are exporting LPG to India after importing the fuel from Middle Eastern suppliers.

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya,

Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are the Indian northeastern states having a total population of around 60 million.

Meanwhile, LPG price in the country surged by around 20 per cent, the highest in years, within one week of the start of the export.

Each LPG cylinder weighing 12 kg is now being sold at Tk 1,200 (US\$14.11), up by Tk 200.

Privately owned LPG importers and marketers raised the price as energy prices surged in the global market recently, said Saidul Islam, a LPG trading expert.

LPG consumption in Bangladesh has seen a five-fold jump over the past three years riding on its increased use in households, commercial entities and vehicles, market insiders said.

Currently around 1.25 million tonnes of LPG are consumed annually, up from 250,000 tonnes in 2015.

Bangladesh consumed around 650,000 tonnes of LPG in 2017, up from 400,000 tonnes in 2016, market players said.

Favourable government policy, duty waiver on the import of LPG and its machinery and crackdown on illegal gas connections have helped expand the use of LPG across the country.

A government strategy to popularise LPG consumption instead of piped natural gas to cope with the fast-depleting natural gas reserves has also supported the consumption growth. Riding on the booming LPG consumption

in Bangladesh, the number of such companies has increased rapidly.

Currently, some two dozens of LPG operators are actively involved in trading in the country, which was just six in 2015.

Some 60 firms have obtained licences from the ministry to run LPG business, said the energy ministry official.

Bangladesh's LPG market is import-dominated as more than 60 per cent of cylinders and 95 per cent of the country's total requirement are met with imports, he added. (Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: 13th January, 2020)



INDEE Bangladesh 2020

India eyes BD's machinery, equipment mkt

A three-day trade show on Indian engineering products kicked off in the city on 23rd January aimed at forging global supply chain with partners from the two neighboring countries.



Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun visiting a stall after inaugurating the INDEE Bangladesh 2020 at ICCB

Industries minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun inaugurated the fair titled 'INDEE Bangladesh 2020' as the chief guest at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) while Indian high commissioner in Dhaka Riva Ganguly Das addressed the event as the especial guest.

EEPC India, the premier Indian trade and investment promotion organisation, organised the event, sponsored by the ministry of commerce and industry, and supported by India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IBCCI).

Some 120 leading Indian companies, including Indian Oil Corporation and Bharat Earth Movers, are taking part in the event.

Addressing the inaugural function, the minister said Indian investment would help increase export

of multipurpose products from Bangladesh to India apart from reducing the trade gap between the two countries.

Bangladesh is an attractive name for investment as all the indicators are positive here in Bangladesh, he said, adding that the government is providing all necessary supports to build knowledge-based high-tech industries in the country.

Mr. Humayun said the Indian investment in Bangladesh reached \$3.11 billion as of now and it is rising.

Riva Ganguly Das said Bangladesh and India will work jointly on the formation and integration of global supply chains in various fields. Besides, she said, there is an opportunity for India to supply machinery to the country's leading export sector - readymade garment.

Terming Bangladesh's economic growth impressive, she said: "PM Sheikh Hasina announced the light engineering products as the product of the year 2020 in Bangladesh, and 'INDEE 2020' is giving an excellent platform to get connected with the engineering equipment and machinery providers of India and Bangladesh."

According to EEPC India, Bangladesh has emerged as India's major trade partner with bilateral trade exceeding US\$ 10 billion along with Bangladesh exports crossing the \$ 1.0 mark in the year 2019.

Ravi Sehgal, chairman of EEPC, Muntakim Ashraf of FBCCI, Md Abdul Matlub Ahmad, president of IBCCI, also addressed the event among others.

The exhibition is open to everyone from 9 am to 8 pm daily until Friday. (Courtesy: The Financial Express; Dated: 23th January, 2020)

Third Rail Link with India



Work is going on in full swing to construct the rail track from Nilphamari's Chilahati station to the Indian border as the authorities concerned are expecting inauguration of the third direct train communication with the neighbouring country by July this year. Photo: EAM Asaduzzaman

The third direct train connection with neighbouring India, through bordering Chilahati station in Nilphamari, is likely to start in July this year as half

of the work for the purpose has been done in six months.

The construction work of rail lines from the station to the border is going on in full swing to connect with Indian tracks at Holdibari station of Kunchbihar district in west Bengal, said officials of Bangladesh Railway (BR).

Two existing rail routes with India are Dhaka-Kolkata-Dhaka and Khulna-Kolkata-Khulna.

For better connectivity with India, the Bangladesh government launched a project to construct 6.724-kilometre-long rail line from Chilahati station to the border and 2.636-kilometre loop line at the station, colour light signalling, telecommunication system etc in June last year, said Touhidur Rahman, senior sub assistant engineer of BR.

Max Infrastructure Ltd got the Tk 69 crore work order

for its completion by one year, said the official, who monitors the work.

Bangladesh Railways Minister Nurul Islam accompanied by Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguli inaugurated the work at Chilahati station in the middle of last year.

In the ceremony, the minister expressed optimism that prime ministers of both the countries will inaugurate the route by July 2020 through a video conference.

"The rail route was operative till 1965. Darjeeling Mail, running from Kolkata's Shaladah railway station via Ranaghat of West Bengal, entered this country [then East Pakistan] to touch Bheramara, Hardinge Bridge, Santahar, Hili, Parbotipur Nilphamari and Chilahati before reaching Indian territory in the north to go to Darjeeling via Holdibari, Jalpaiguri and Shiliguri," the Indian envoy said at the inaugural function.

She also hinted that the coming rail link might be a similar one.

"After completion of the work, BR will be able to operate in Dhaka-Shiliguri-Dhaka route, facilitating passengers to visit nearby Indian tourist spot Darjeeling. And India is likely to operate a train on Kolkata-Shiliguri route, which will shorten the existing 537-kilometre distance by 200 kilometres," said BR's Additional Director General Shahidul Islam.

However, the arrangement will be finalised after discussion between the Bangladesh and Indian authorities, he said.

Project-in-charge Rokonzaman Shihab said the work will hopefully be complete by June as 50% of it is already complete.

By this time, Indian authorities completed construction of 6.50 km rail lines in its territory from Holdibari station to the border adjacent to Chilahati and conducted trial run of trains in the section, said Md Mobin, stationmaster at Chilahati. (Courtesy: The Daily Star; Dated: 15th January, 2020)

SBI celebrates 45 years of its presence in Bangladesh



Finance Minister A. H. M. Mustafa Kamal (2nd from R, front row) and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das (1st from R, front row) inaugurating a programme in Dhaka recently, marking State Bank of India's (SBI) 45 years of presence in Bangladesh. SBI's Managing Director (Global Banking & Subsidiaries) Dinesh Kumar Khara, DMD C. Venkat Nageswar, Chief General Manager of International Banking Group BRS Satyanarayana and Country Head of Bangladesh Operations Dr. P. C. Saboo were present

Marico launches new products

Studio X, the first international male grooming product line of Marico Bangladesh, has launched a complete range of products designed by international styling experts specifically for men.

Studio X was inaugurated with grandeur at a hotel in the capital on Tuesday. Marico Bangladesh Ltd Managing Director Ashish Goupal inaugurated the new brand while the lead vocalist of the rock band Nemesis Zohad was present at the launching as the special guest.

The Studio X range comprises with shampoo, face wash, hair gel and deodorant for men. Apart from this, the brand also launched a website-Studio X



Marico Bangladesh Ltd Managing Director Ashish Goupal and the lead vocalist of the rock band Nemesis Zohad pose for a photo with new male grooming products at a product launching event in Dhaka

Style.com for the style-conscious men of Bangladesh. The website has been designed with information on grooming and styling for men. (Courtesy: The Asian Age; Dated: 29th January, 2020)

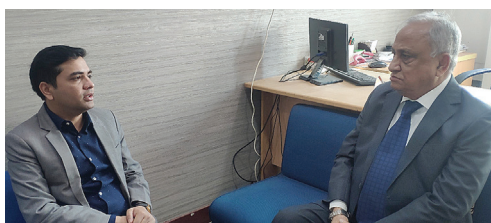
Visitors to the Chamber



January 06: Rajeshwar Ankolekar, Head of International Sales, WILO Mather and Platt Pvt. Ltd., Pune, India accompanied by S. M. Saidul Alam, Country Manager Bangladesh visited the IBCCI on the day and exchanged views with Secretary & CEO of the Chamber on matters relating to his company's business promotion in Bangladesh and IBCCI membership.



January 06: Aman Khan, Manager (Projects) of Indian Phosphate Limited, Udaipur, India met IBCCI Secretary & CEO on the day at the Chamber office and discussed matters relating to his company's business promotion and setting up of a Branch Office in Bangladesh.



January 06: Mukesh Kharia, Exhibition Director of NEXGEN Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi called on the IBCCI Secretary & CEO Jahangir Bin Alam on the day at the Chamber office and discussed matters relating to organizing "Homeland Security Expo" in Bangladesh from September 07 – 08, 2020 at International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka.



January 20: Ms. Rumela Roy Das, Regional Manager, India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) met the IBCCI Secretary & CEO Jahangir Bin Alam on the day at the Chamber office and exchanged views on matters relating to ITPO's participation in the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2021 and collaboration of IBCCI for the said Fair.



January 21: Tamojit Das, Managing Director of Saga Engineering Enterprises, Kolkata met the IBCCI Secretary & CEO Jahangir Bin Alam on the day at the Chamber office and discussed matters relating to his company's business promotion in Bangladesh.



January 23: Pratap Padode, Founder President, First Construction Council of India and Executive Director of Smart Cities Council India visited the Chamber on the day and discussed matters relating to cooperation between IBCCI and two Councils and signing of MOUs between the three organizations.



February 13: Sudhin Roy Chowdhury, Designated Partner of FIRST BAY Financial Advisors LLP, Mumbai, India accompanied by Managing Director & CEO of LIC Bangladesh Arup Dasgupta met the IBCCI Secretary & CEO Jahangir Bin Alam at the Chamber office and exchanged views on development of Insurance industry in Bangladesh.

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