

All roads lead to Dhaka

South Asia Maritime and Logistics Forum 2018 curtain raiser event was held in Dhaka among guests from ministry, trade associations and industry.



Government representatives, trade associations and industry leaders in South Asian maritime sector will head to Dhaka in October as the Capital city of Bangladesh will be hosting the 2nd edition of South Asia Maritime and Logistics Forum (SAMLf) on October 9-10, 2018. The forum is being organized by Maritime Gateway and CIMC Events in association with Ministry of Shipping, Government of Bangladesh.

SAMLf aims to bring together governments, trade associations and industries in South Asian region in contact with leading business enterprises from Europe, Middle East and South East Asia and beyond. Last year, the debut edition of SAMLf was held in Mumbai, where for the first time, all the countries in South Asia came together to see how they can all work jointly as a region that is shaping up to be a driver

of economic growth, trade and market expansion for the entire world, and in the process creates bigger opportunities for the entire region.

In a bid to reach out to the trade in each member country of South Asia, the annual summit is planned to be organized in a different country each year. The first edition of SAMLf was hosted in India. Considering the huge response received by the debut event and given the immense maritime and EXIM trade potential of Bangladesh, the Ministry of Shipping, Government of Bangladesh has

come forward to host the 2018 edition of SAMLf.

This forum will bring deep insights into maritime infrastructure, focus on investment opportunities and bring meaningful relationships to the table. It will explore opportunities, find solutions for existing challenges and identify ways to collaborate. This forum provides each South Asian country an opportunity to market collectively and individually. New business and investment opportunities in the region and respective countries can be promoted to a global audience.

For connectivity to China, Asia and Middle East we have the Silk route. We are well connected to Europe and have some connectivity to India and Sri Lanka as well. But we need to build direct connectivity with Nepal and other neighbours.



- Md. Abdus Samad
Secretary Shipping
Ministry of Shipping, People's
Republic of Bangladesh

Usually around the world trade is higher with the countries in proximity, but unfortunately that is not happening in South Asia. There is a problem with integration, which is actually an opportunity for integration and to reap the benefits of expanding trade within this region.



- Kazi M Aminul Islam
Executive Chairman, BIDA
Prime Minister's Office

It is not just about connecting physical infrastructure, the bigger point is to connect the bilateral FTAs and regional frameworks to promote increased trade among the countries in the region, while bringing down the logistics cost.



- H.E.M Riaz Hamidullah
High Commissioner
Bangladesh High Commission to
Sri Lanka

There should be a strong focus on developing economic and diplomatic ties between south Asian countries in terms of maritime and logistics. Increased trade in South Asia will help to pave the way for better infrastructure and maritime development within the region.



- Mahbulul Anam
President, Bangladesh Freight
Forwarders Association

Although we are a 2 billion population together, the trade volumes and therefore the fallout, the quality of life for the last person on the bottom of the pyramid is still something that we all want to work upon. This is possible only through improved logistics network.



- Atul C Kulkarni
Adviser (International Projects)
Ministry of Shipping, Govt of India

"We are trying to unite and connect, as Sri Lanka's progress depends on the region's progress. We look the same, our cultures are the same, but we are disconnected for some reason. We have to become the strength of Asia and we have every ingredient to do so.



- Rohan Masakorala
Founder & Chairman
CIMC Events



Adani's Dhamra LNG terminal to supply gas to Bangladesh, Myanmar

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) said its under-construction LNG regasification terminal at Dhamra port in Odisha will play a strategic role in supplying gas to Bangladesh and Myanmar. The proposed Dhamra LNG import terminal is designed to have an initial capacity of 5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), expandable up to 10 MTPA. It will have two full containment-type tanks of 180,000 m³ capacity each and would be the first of its kind in India and the second LNG terminal on the east coast after Indian Oil Corporation (IOC's) Ennore terminal in Tamil Nadu. ●

Benapole land port needs more warehouses



Businesses that trade with India demanded more warehouses at the Benapole land port by private sector players like in the Chittagong port for proper storage of imported and export consignments.

"It's absolutely a necessity," said Motiar Rahman, a clearing and forwarding agent, adding that 19 private warehouses were built around the Chittagong port in the last ten years for safer storage of

imported and export goods.

The existing 60,000 square feet government-owned warehouse is simply not adequate for the expanded trading relationship between the two neighbouring countries, businessmen said at a seminar styled "addressing land port issues for better Indo-Bangla trade".

Due to congestion on either sides of the border, importers and exporters have to wait for

as many as 25 days and in that time goods deteriorate in quality or go missing in the absence of adequate storage facilities.

In the recent past more than 4,000 trucks were unable to enter Bangladesh from Indian Bangaon-Chakdaha side due to lack of space in Benapole, said Rahman.

Abdul Matlub Ahmad, the IBCCI president, echoed the same. "It is very difficult for businessmen to wait for up to 25 days for unloading goods." Ahmad recommended making all 22 land ports along the India-Bangladesh bordering areas fully operational to further bilateral trade.

Currently, Bangladesh has 23 land ports, 22 of which are located along the Indian border. "Twelve more land ports are on way now," said Tapan Kumar Chakravorty, Chairman of the Bangladesh Land Port Authority, which manages six of the land ports. ●

Courtesy: The Daily Star

Tripura seeks removal of export barriers on land ports

Tripura has requested the Centre to remove non-tariff trade restrictions on export of commodities through its land custom stations (LCSs) to Bangladesh.

Tripura, which has seven LCSs on the Indo-Bangladesh border, has been exporting commodities worth only ₹4.6 crore to Bangladesh, while imports coming through its land ports were worth ₹300 crore, said Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb.

"The restriction is imposed on rubber, bamboo, tea and cashew nuts. All these items are allowed to be exported to Bangladesh through others LCSs in other parts of the country except Tripura," Deb said.

He said the State has been producing many rubber-based and bamboo-based products, tea and cashew nuts for export as suggested by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The state wants the Commerce Ministry to take up the matter with the Bangladesh government so that the port restrictions can be removed.

Exporting through Bangladesh can open up a major avenue for increasing pineapple production. Similarly, there is ample production of jack fruit in the State and it is in high demand in Bangladesh, he said. ●

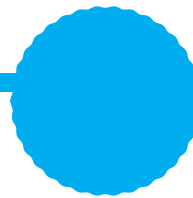
Land Ports Authority moots upgrade of customs stations to ICPs, seeks operational freedom

The Land Ports Authority (LPAI) has proposed a complete overhaul of India's border trade management facilities. The LPAI was created in March 2012 to build and operate state-of-the-art integrated check-posts (ICPs) with neighbours.

In a recent proposal to the ministry, the LPAI expressed its intention to takeover all Land Customs Stations (LCS) dotting India's border, and upgrade them to mini-ICPs aided with a weigh-bridge, warehousing, parking facilities and other amenities. LCSs suffer from a near-complete lack of basic facilities. Officially, there are 136 such customs stations. However, not all of them are functional.

The proposal, if approved, will remove multiplicity of agencies in managing border infrastructure, cut red-tape, reduce the scope of duty leakage through under-invoicing and help offer standardised services to trade and passengers.

LPAI currently operates five ICPs – two each along the Bangladesh and Nepal borders, and one on the Pakistan side. Two more ICPs – one each on the Myanmar and Bangladesh border – are under construction. In the second phase, 13 ICPs are proposed to be developed. ●



China to develop Bangladesh industrial zone

China is developing a 750-acre industrial park in Bangladesh which will largely be used by Chinese manufacturing firms as part of its push to expand links with South Asia and beyond. State-run China Harbour Engineering Company will hold a 70 percent share in a joint venture being formed for the park with the Bangladesh Special Economic Zone Authority (BSEZA). The industrial park will be in Chittagong and will take five years to become fully operational. ●

BIDA urges Japanese businesses, entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh



“Whatever achievement we have made, Japan has been a partner in our progress,” Kazi M Aminul Islam, Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority or BIDA, said recently

at a seminar arranged by the embassy of Bangladesh in Japan, BIDA, and the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry where over 100 businessmen of the Japan’s port city and commercial centre convened.

Many of them who have invested in Bangladesh praised the business environment to lure their peers. “There are a number of challenges, but it’s a very thriving country. Once you get off the plane, you will feel that there are a lot of opportunities in the country,” said Masahiro Hiraishi, President of Maruhisa, a company that has factory in Bangladesh and exports clothes to Japan from there.

Known for its development support to Bangladesh, Japan is now emerging as a major trading partner. The bilateral trade is nearly \$3 billion and Japan is now the ninth export market.

The BIDA executive chairman is branding this ‘new Bangladesh’ in different capitals with special seminars focusing to woo foreign investors. He told the Japanese investors that Bangladesh is a country with a “winning combination” for investors. Those include “a business friendly government, competitive skilled workforce, ever expanding infrastructure, improving business climate and friendly and welcoming people”. ●

New Era in Transshipment

The new law on transshipment of Indian EXIM containers is going to have a long lasting impact in boosting transshipment at Indian ports and reducing overall freight forwarding cost

In a bid to check outflow of Indian EXIM cargo to foreign ports and to boost transshipment at Indian ports, the government has declared new policy giving relaxation for coastal movement of EXIM transshipment containers and empties on foreign carriers. Earlier as per sub-section (1) of Section 407 of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 foreign container lines were restricted from moving transship EXIM containers or empties from an Indian port to another. A special license issued by DG Shipping was needed by a foreign carrier to load empty or loaded container. Due to which EXIM containers largely transshipped through foreign ports. Over the years containerized EXIM cargo movement grew in volume but at the same

time the imbalance in India’s merchandise trade remains prevalent as a result there has been disparity in availability of empty containers at Indian ports. It requires repositioning of empty containers between Indian ports as per requirement at a competitive rate to keep overall freight costs low for exporters and importers.

However, as per the latest notification the restrictions under sub-section (1) of Section 407 of Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 on foreign container carriers is abolished if they are fully or partly engaged in transportation of empty or loaded exim containers meant for transshipment. Meanwhile, the foreign carriers availing the relaxation will have to adhere to the guidelines that

the loaded containers should be consigned through Bill of Lading to or from a port outside India for the purpose of transshipment at an Indian port. Also the laden containers are loaded or unloaded at an Indian port for transshipment purpose. Additionally the loaded containers should be covered by the arrival or departure manifest for transshipment.

Meanwhile in a dynamic international business scenario where international shipping tariff is highly competitive, in order to achieve better economies of scale, container business has rapidly evolved from point-to-point to hub-and-spoke model. Such a model has not fully evolved in India and this has resulted in almost 33 per cent of Indian container cargo getting transshipped at foreign ports. The latest decision will further pave way for growth of transshipment hub ports in India as a result it will help in reducing logistics cost for shippers and

plug loss of foreign exchange to overseas ports. The ease of movement for foreign carriers will not only help growth of India’s very own transshipment hub ports, but it will also lead to higher competition amongst shipping lines.

Sensing a change in cabotage law Indian fleet operators had already threatened to dump local registration. While the government has been encouraging coastal shipping that prompted domestic operators like Shreyas to invest heavily to add capacity will now have to compete with foreign lines that have cost advantages owing to tax and other benefits. It is to be seen what will be the next course of action by Indian vessel owners, and will foreign carriers invest enough in Indian shipping industry to improve the situation. Industry pundits opine improvement in cargo volume will attract much needed investment in shipping fleet, if so it will be a win-win situation for the sector. ●

Chittagong acts to ensure quicker delivery of LCL cargo

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has moved to ensure delivery of less-than-containerload (LCL) cargoes within three days of unloading containers in the port yard.

The Prime Minister's Office recently asked the CPA to take proper measures to ensure that LCL cargo is unstuffed in two days and delivered to the consignees within three days.

The move came as the delays in container delivery allegedly caused congestion at the port's yard, with importers having to wait for their unstuffed cargo – the process used to separate cargo from multiple parties.

Businesses allege that they need to wait nearly a week or two to get LCL cargo delivered, due to various procedural delays.

An LCL container holds cargo of several consignees, thus it needs to be unstuffed in the port yard and delivered from there. While most full containerload (FCL) containers go outside the port for delivery, a portion of LCL containers are unstuffed inside the port area for delivery. In 2017, Chittagong handled 44,332 LCL containers in its port yard. ●

Courtesy: JOC.com



MOL joint venture Haiphong International Container Terminal opens in Vietnam

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) joint venture company Haiphong International Container Terminal Co. Ltd has inaugurated the new Haiphong International Container Terminal (HICT) at LachHuyen Port, Vietnam.

HICT is the first terminal in Northern Vietnam with a berth deep enough to allow calls by 14,000-teu containerships. It will meet customer demands for shorter transit times and

lower transport costs, while contributing to economic growth in Northern Vietnam, including Haiphong Industrial Park, since large-size container vessels, which offer direct links to Asia and North America/Europe, can call at the port. The opening of the terminal means the opening of LachHuyen Port itself. The LachHuyen Port construction project is the first public-private partnership between the government of Japan and Vietnam. ●

Bangladesh shippers get Indian port routing option



Kolkata Port Trust (KPT) has agreed to let Bangladeshi shippers use its port for export/import trade to and from third-nations, opening an option for Dhaka-based traders to avoid the frequently congested Chittagong port. In a recent letter to the Bangladesh High Commission in Kolkata, KPT Chairman Vinit Kumar expressed his consent to let Bangladeshi shippers use the ports. Kumar also sought to know the Bangladesh government's plan to make this new trade option a reality.

Kumar mentioned that current trade between Kolkata port and Bangladeshi ports and

terminals via the coastal route is limited to bilateral trade, and is not open to third-nation, export-import trade.

"Certain shipping lines have shown interest that if EXIM trade is allowed from Pangaon terminal of Bangladesh then containers going to European countries having garments and other white goods which have strict timelines to maintain, can be routed through Kolkata port," he wrote.

Kumar also mentioned that KPT has already received the required permissions from India customs authorities to handle cargo to/from a third country. ●

Courtesy: JOC.com

Wilhelmsen's complex crane shipment boosts Chittagong's capacity

Chittagong is one of the world's most congested ports. Vessels can wait seven to 10 days for a berth at Bangladesh's main port, resulting in high costs and congestion surcharges.

To deal with the delays, Chittagong officials ordered additional gantry and yard cranes and other cargo-handling machinery. Last September, the port began receiving the first of 46 pieces of container-handling equipment from China, France, Germany, and Poland.

Offloaded were four rubber-tire

gantry (RTG) cranes, four straddle carriers, four container reach stackers for loaded containers, four empty-container forklift trucks, five container movers, four telescopic handlers, 10 five-ton low mast forklifts, 10 five-ton high mast forklifts, and one log handler.

Additional pieces requiring more complex handling were shipped later. These included RTGs and related handling equipment that port officials were counting on to decongest the chronically backlogged port and to facilitate badly needed expansion. ●

ICD Khodiyar offers superfast train service to Mundra Port

During 2017-18, Concor ICD Khodiyar moved 935 trains export containers to Mundra and Pipavav Ports. It also moved 935 trains from the ports to evacuate import containers destined for ICD Khodiyar.

ICD Khodiyar links Mundra Port with 2 export trains per day and links Pipavav with 1 export train a day. Of the 935 trains loaded

during 2017-18, 532 export trains were run on regular and reliable basis for Mundra Port. Two superfast export trains are run per day for Mundra Port. 332 trains reached Mundra Port within 12 hours during 2017-18. Trains for Mumbai facilities like JNPCT/NSICT/GTIL are run on trade requirement basis. Daily road service is available; average 10 containers were sent per day during last year. ●

ONE introduces EC5 route, calling at Port of Colombo



ONE, formed by a recent merger of Japanese carriers K Line, MOL and NYK, launched its new EC5 service on April 23, 2018, at the South Asia Gateway Terminal (SAGT) at the Port of Colombo – Sri Lanka's first private terminal.

SAGT opened in 1999.

A consortium of local and global companies own the terminal, including APM Terminals, which holds a 33% share.

It has seen almost continuous year-on-year volume growth and achieved a container throughput of 1.8 million TEUs in 2017.

ONE's EC5 service will link Asia to the East Coast of North America, with calls at Laem Chabang, Thailand; Cai Mep, Vietnam; Singapore and Colombo before crossing the Atlantic via the Suez Canal, calling Halifax, Canada; and New York, Savannah, Jacksonville and Norfolk in the US, before returning eastbound with stops at Halifax; Jebel Ali, UAE, and Singapore.

The Port of Colombo, with a combined throughput of 6.2 million TEUs in 2017, has risen to a ranking of 23rd worldwide.

It is a major transshipment port for India, Bangladesh and domestic cargoes, as well as for cargoes in transit from Southeast Asian ports to Europe and North America.

Transshipment represents 75% of Colombo's overall container handling traffic. ●

China to Build LNG-Fueled Power Plant at Hambantota



Sri Lanka's development and trade minister Malik Samarawickrama confirmed that Chinese investors have been cleared to build a \$700 million natural gas-powered electrical station in the Chinese-run port of Hambantota. He first announced plans for Chinese state-owned engineering company Sinomach to build the plant earlier this month. The 400-gigawatt power plant will be fueled with LNG.

According to local media, Samarawickrama also noted China's growing importance on the world stage, and suggested that his government intended to cooperate fully with Beijing's "Belt and Road" development strategy.

The plans for the new power plant follow several months after China Merchants Port Holding took over operations of the Port of Hambantota. This \$1.1 billion concession agreement, signed last July, was negotiated in exchange for a reduction in Sri Lanka's heavy burden of debt to Chinese banks. Under ex-president Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka borrowed billions from China to finance projects at Hambantota, including a commercially unsuccessful airport and a little-used four-lane highway. Due to these loans and others, Sri Lanka's government

now spends an estimated 80 percent of its revenue repaying its loans.

Hambantota is directly adjacent to the busiest east-west shipping lanes crossing the Indian Ocean, but it has not enjoyed commercial success since its opening in 2010. India and the United States have expressed concern that since the port appears to lack commercial viability, China may not intend to use it for merchant shipping, but rather as a naval base. Sri Lanka has worked to allay these concerns: in announcing the deal last year, Ports Minister Mainda Samarasinghe promised that "no naval ship, including Chinese ones, can call at Hambantota without our permission."

China continues to provide Sri Lanka with loans and direct investments. In April, state-owned China Communication Construction Company (CCCC) announced that it will invest \$800 million in an underground road network in Colombo's Port City, a CCCC-operated land reclamation and construction project that is already worth \$1.4 billion. In addition, the state-owned Export-Import Bank of China has agreed to lend Sri Lanka \$1 billion for the construction of a new highway from Colombo to Kandy, the nation's second-largest city. ●

Trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan



- The trade volume between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which used to stand at \$2.7 billion few years back, has now dropped to meager \$500 million in the current fiscal year.
- In the same way, Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan equalled \$1.43 billion in FY16, dropped to \$1.27 billion in FY17 and will likely significantly drop in FY 2018 given the dwindling figures in first half of the year.
- By another measure, the transit trade situation can be assessed from the fact that the number of containers that used to pass into Afghanistan has reduced to 7,000 from a peak of 70,000.
- On the other hand, trade figures are on the rise in terms of trade with and via Iran. In the current fiscal year, Iran's exports to Afghanistan increased by 13.57 percent to reach \$2.79 billion.
- Eighty percent of Afghanistan's cargo traffic has shifted to Chabahar and Bandar-e-Abbas in Iran. The value of transit goods to Afghanistan via these two ports is anticipated to reach \$5 billion in the near future.
- Bilateral trade with Pakistan has been further dented as Afghan prefers Indian products. Pakistan has reportedly lost its 50 per cent share of the Kabul market to India. In June 2017, India and Afghanistan opened an air corridor to link Kabul with Delhi and later with Mumbai.
- In the first six months, goods worth more than \$20 million were exported to India. ●

Nepal-Bangladesh Trade

Trade between Nepal and Bangladesh is far below its potential. Volume of Nepal trade with Bangladesh is just 0.5 percent of total trade of Nepal. Trade between the two countries stood around \$50 million in 2016-17. Of this, Nepal's import from Bangladesh was \$40 million and export to Bangladesh was merely \$10 million – running deficit for Nepal over the last three years, with a reversal in balance of

trade. Bangladesh provides two sea-ports and three land borders for movement of Nepal's transit traffic. Currently, two railway corridors and one road corridor are designated for movement of transit traffic between Nepal and Bangladesh. But only one road corridor linking Bangladesh via Panitanki and Phulbari in India is under operation and 90 percent of bilateral trade takes place through this corridor only. ●

Nepal eye's rail use, as well

In addition, land-locked Nepal wants to use Chittagong and Mongla ports for its external trade, which would cut its dependence on Indian ports in Kolkata. A Nepalese high-level delegation is scheduled to check the condition of the transit route in Bangladesh next week, before sending cargo-laden trucks toward Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Train transport takes about 24 hours to reach the west end of the Bangabandhu Bridge and costs \$480 per TEU. From that point, transporting a container to apparel factories in Gazipur or Dhaka costs an additional \$250.

Conversely, transporting a TEU from Kolkata to Dhaka by truck costs \$800, but the transit time is about 22 to 25 days. Trucks need to wait weeks in the Benapole land port area owing to congestion and administrative procedures, he said.

Transporting a TEU from India by transshipment ports in Colombo or Singapore through Chittagong port costs about \$2,000 to the Dhaka area. Further, it takes nearly a month since containers wait in transshipment ports and face further congestion at Chittagong port. ●

Courtesy: JOC.com

Non-tariff barriers holding back Nepal's export trade

Nepal faces a number of non-tariff barriers to its exports despite being a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) which promise hassle-free cross-border movement of goods and services.

Apart from sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT), Nepali exporters encounter several hurdles while exporting goods to India and third countries.

Countervailing duty on garments, separate licence requirements for ginger and agro products, anti-dumping duty, quarantine issues, documentation process, quota provision and access gateway limits have hit Nepali exports.

As per stakeholders, exporters need to submit separate radiation free certificates for a number of exports to Bangladesh. Similarly, Bangladesh allows the import of acrylic yarn only by sea. ●

New Indo-Nepal cross-border rail link

Following a meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli along with delegates, it has been decided that India will build a strategic railway link between Raxaul in Bihar and Kathmandu in Nepal, said an official statement. This development is seen as a move targeted to enhance people-to-people

contact and make way for cargo movement

Three other railway projects are in the pipeline as well. Apart from this, the two countries are exploring inland waterways in the Himalayan region, which will prove to be a great contributor to the economic development of that region, providing an additional access to Nepal by sea. ●



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**9 & 10 OCTOBER, 2018
LE MÉRIDIEN, DHAKA
BANGLADESH**



BANGLADESH: A TALE OF TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPE, RESILIENT PEOPLE AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

KEY FACTS

- GDP of Bangladesh is currently the 44th largest globally.
- IMF finds Bangladesh's economy as the second fastest growing major economy of 2016 @ 7.1%.
- With Dhaka and Chittagong as principal financial hubs, Bangladesh's financial sector is the second largest in sub-continent.
- Bangladesh has jumped four spots to 23 in the annual ranking of the worlds' leading emerging markets.
- With over US\$ 75 billion annual foreign trade, Bangladesh is an apparel industry powerhouse with US\$ 30 billion+ exports.
- Improved business climate ranking, moved three notches up to 28th rank.
- In infrastructure and transport connections, moved three notches up to 44th rank.
- 2017 index further consolidates the position of Bangladesh as the emerging Asian market.

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