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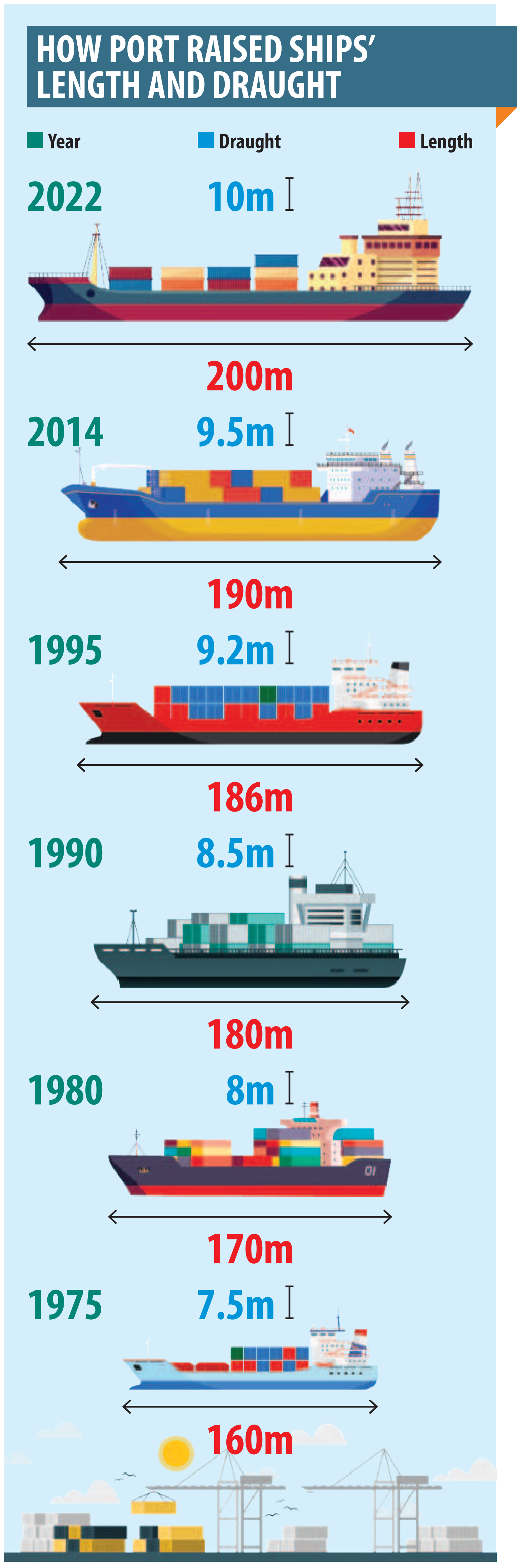

New era begins as Ctg port sees bigger ships berth

Allows vessel of 10-metre draught for the first time

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

A vessel with 10 metres draught berthed at a jetty of the Chattogram port for the first time yesterday, a major leap forward as the movement of larger ships is expected to cut costs and save time.

Port users hope that the increased draught limit would enable the transportation of more cargoes and containers by a single vessel and help ease congestion at the seaport, which handles around 90 per cent of Bangladesh's $135 billion annual trade.

"It is very good news," said Faruque Hassan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

Owing to the lower draught in the Karnaphuli channel, relatively larger ships could not enter the channel as of yesterday. Now they will be able to come with higher loads.

"It is a good signal to international shipping companies. Our buyers will also become happy," Hassan said.

"The port is performing well and further dredging would increase the depth of the channel."

Port users say initially container vessels would benefit from the move since the new draught limit is applicable for only the container jetties at General Cargo Berth, Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) and New Mooring Container Terminal.

A team led by CPA Member (Harbour) Commodore M Fazlar Rahman successfully berthed MV Common Atlas, a Marshal Island-flagged vessel, at a jetty of the CCT at 5.24pm yesterday. The vessel arrived from the Port of Santos of Brazil with 60,500 tonnes of sugar.

The vessels with a draught of up to 7.5 metres and a length of 160 metres could berth at the port in 1975. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) gradually increased the draught limit in the last 47 years to cope with the increasing trade demand.

Until yesterday, ships with a maximum 9.5-metre draught, the vertical distance between the waterline and the bottom of the ship's hull, and of up to 190 metres in length could berth at some of the port's main jetties.

The authority has fixed the new draught limit upon recommendation by United Kingdom-based consultant firm HR Wallingford.

The firm conducted a detailed hydrological study in the Karnaphuli and gave the opinion that the port can accommodate vessels with 10 metres in draught, said CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk.

Port users hope that the increased draught limit would enable the transportation of more cargoes and containers by a single vessel and help ease congestion at the seaport, which handles around 90 per cent of Bangladesh's $135 billion annual trade

"The navigability of the port channel and the jetty areas has improved thanks to the prevention of siltation through continuous maintenance and dredging. This enabled the port to raise the draught limit."

Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) Chairman Syed Md Arif said till to date, container vessels arriving at the port jetties could carry around 2,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of containers to 2,500 TEUs.

"With the new draught and length limit, vessels would now be able to carry at least 500 TEUs to 700 TEUs more."

As vessels would be able to carry more containers, freight costs would be reduced, leading to a decrease in import and export costs. The turnaround time of vessels would also come down, he said.

"Definitely, this will help us save a lot," said Abdul Bashar Chowdhury, chairman of BSM Group, a commodity importer based in Chattogram.

An importer could bring 20,000 tonnes of imported items in a vessel with up to an 8.5-metre draught. Now, businesses will able to bring about 10,000 tonnes more goods in a single ship.

"This will give more comfort to shipping companies and help save time as importers will not need to use smaller vehicles to bring cargoes to the port jetty.

The risk of pilferage will also decline. Overall, the efficiency will improve," Chowdhury said.

BSAA Chairman Arif, however, said initially bulk vessels may not reap the benefit since six jetties dedicated to such ships are having as high as 8.5 metres draught.

BGMEA's Hassan, also the managing director of Giant Textiles Ltd, said the authorities should speed up the construction of the Bay Terminal and other projects to allow much bigger ships to come.

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury is scheduled to inaugurate the berthing of the 10-metre-draught vessel today.

MATARBARI PLANT LINK ROAD

Cost to spiral for poor feasibility studies

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Although the overall length of a road linking the Matarbari coal-based power plant in Maheshkhali upazila to Cox's Bazar town has reduced, the construction cost is set to increase by more 70 per cent from the initial estimate owing to poor feasibility studies.

The initial cost of the project for construction and repair of the 43.66-kilometre (km) road was estimated to be Tk 602 crore and scheduled to be complete June 2020.

Following the first revision, this estimate reached Tk 660 crore and completion deadline extended to June 2022.

Now, due to a second revision, an additional Tk 365 crore will be sought, raising the overall cost to Tk 1,025 crore, according to documents of the planning commission.

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Moreover, the five-year project is expected to take nine years and be completed by June 2024.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges took up the project in July 2015 in which the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) was the implementing agency.

Of the overall cost coming up in the second revision, Tk 791 crore will come from loans of Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and Tk 235 crore from the government exchequer.

The second revision planned may be proposed at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council tomorrow.

PROJECT COMPONENT CHANGES

Of the road, 10.31 km was initially planned to be constructed for the first time at an estimated cost of Tk 96 crore.

In the second revision, this length was decreased by 2.96 km while the cost increased by Tk 105 crore.

Another 12.80 km of the road was initially supposed to be repaired on a large scale at a cost of Tk 35 crore.

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STOCKS

DSEX ▲	CASPI ▲
0.57%	0.42%
6,250.50	18,431.32

COMMODITIES (AS OF FRIDAY)

Gold ▲	Oil ▲
$1,920.38	$80.03
(per ounce)	(per barrel)

ASIAN MARKETS (FRIDAY CLOSINGS)

MUMBAI	TOKYO	SINGAPORE	SHANGHAI
▲ 0.51%	▼ 1.25%	▲ 0.79%	▲ 1.01%
60,261.18	26,119.52	3,293.75	3,195.31

Bangladesh misses out on using textile scraps in full

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Spinners in Bangladesh are facing a shortage of waste cotton and textile scraps since a major portion of them is shipped abroad amid higher demand for recycled yarns and fabrics worldwide.

Bangladesh, the second-largest apparel producer in the world, sees a huge volume of cotton textile scraps, but these wastes are usually dumped into a landfill, burned, exported, or recycled into low-quality fabrics.

This means the country misses the opportunity to produce recycled yarn from the bi-products with a view to manufacturing the apparel products whose demand is rocketing globally.

Owing to fast fashion -- the term used to describe clothing designs that move quickly from the catwalk to stores to take advantage of trends -- and cheaper clothing items, cotton consumption has gone up.

Higher cotton farming is hampering the environment whereas the manufacturing of apparel involves more groundwater, especially during washing and dyeing.

So, many clothing retailers and brands such as H&M prefer the reuse and recycling of garments to avoid environmental damage.

But a section of local traders in Bangladesh feels encouraged to export waste cotton and fabrics than sell them in the local market because of the price factor, said millers.

The shipments of waste cotton and scrap rose 49.67 per cent year-on-year to $153.38 million in the July-December half of the current financial year. It was $102.48 million in the identical period a year earlier.

This forces millers to buy recycled yarns from

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