

Payra Port to complete upgrade by July 2026

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The Payra sea port is being developed under a master plan, and one of the new features is scheduled to be operational by July 2026, said the Payra Port Authority (PPA) yesterday.

The port will enable transhipment for up to 15 commercial vessels simultaneously, said PPA Member (Engineering & Development) Commodore Mohammad Abdul Kader while describing the development plans.

It will contain a 650-metre (m) jetty for berthing 3,000, 3,500 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) container vessels and navigational channels for Panamax vessels (up

to 225m long and 32m wide), he said.

It will also have a 3.25 lakh square metre backup yard and a 10,000 square metre container freight station, he said.

Additional features include uninterrupted river connectivity with Dhaka and other regions, cost effective anchorage and parking facilities, and tariff rates 20 percent to 30 percent lower than those in other ports, said Kader.

He was addressing a seminar at a Kuakata hotel organised by a joint team of Dutch company Royal Haskoning DHV and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The team presented a detailed master plan for the overall development of the third largest sea port in Bangladesh, situated some 270 kilometres south of the capital Dhaka.

The plan came about under a tripartite agreement signed among the team, PPA, and the Ministry of Shipping in February 2019.

A total of 24 studies and development project reports, including the master plan, were scheduled to be delivered within 18 months at a cost of around Tk 125 crore.

However, it was delayed due to the pandemic and political uncertainties, according to the signatories.

No cause for panic over US tariffs

FROM PAGE B1
preservation unless global consumption patterns change.

"This cannot be a one-country conversation," she added. "Without global reflection, sustainability won't hold."

She cited positive developments in textiles, energy, and waste, including low-water dyeing technologies and an upcoming industrial water use policy. However, she voiced concern over the use of toxic chemicals in textiles sold locally and called for a binding chemical management framework.

Highlighting potential in textile recycling, the environment adviser urged greater policy support. She also criticised the glorification of extravagant corporate lifestyles, calling for a cultural shift.

Welcoming the Renewable Energy Policy targeting 30 percent renewables by 2030, she stressed reducing import reliance.

Lastly, she called for inclusive policies on

climate justice, migration, and tobacco, and for reforming investment to protect natural resources amid rising global clothing demand.

Also speaking at the event, Forest E Cookson, former AmCham president, sought urgent planning to relocate Bangladesh's population due to rising sea levels and extreme heat caused by climate change.

He proposed building 50 new cities north of Dhaka, including at least 15 cities with the capacity to accommodate 8 million each. He also recommended shifting ministries, schools, and hospitals from Dhaka to avoid overconcentration.

Cookson also stressed the need for strong governance, housing, water, and digital infrastructure.

He called for developing a national cooling industry, led by the government and universities, to ensure livability and global export potential.

With growing electricity demand from cooling, electric vehicles, and artificial intelligence systems, he recommended

prioritising nuclear energy over gas and renewables.

"The time to act is now," he said, urging a strategic shift as climate threats intensify.

AmCham President Syed Ershad Ahmed emphasised that Bangladesh must align economic growth with environmental sustainability to ensure long-term resilience.

Highlighting risks from pollution, deforestation, and unplanned urbanisation, he noted that Dhaka ranks as the world's third least livable city—a factor likely to erode investor confidence.

He called for stronger enforcement of environmental laws and urgent reform in governance.

Ahmed praised the private sector's green initiatives, including Bangladesh's leadership in LEED certified garment factories, but cited policy delays and regulatory gaps as key barriers.

He urged enhanced public-private collaboration in renewable energy, waste innovation, and climate-

smart infrastructure to make sustainability central to Bangladesh's economic future.

Fehmi Muhsin Yüksel, chief financial officer of Recover, emphasised that sustainability is now vital for textile competitiveness, urging Bangladesh to adopt a national circularity strategy.

Reza Mahmud, country manager of Philip Morris Bangladesh Ltd, highlighted that while smoking harms health and the environment, offering less harmful alternatives like e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products could contribute to public health goals.

Muhammad Imrul Kabir, director of corporate affairs at Chevron Bangladesh, highlighted Chevron's 30-year commitment to Bangladesh's economic growth and community development.

As the country's largest producer, supplying 60 percent of domestic gas, Chevron has invested \$4.2 billion, including \$634 million in local contracts, he added.

Capital machinery imports

FROM PAGE B1
On the supply side, liquidity constraints within the banking sector and growing concerns over the country's creditworthiness have made foreign banks more cautious in confirming LCs, adding to the pressure.

All these factors combined have contributed to a significant drop in LC openings, highlighting the broader strain on both the external and domestic fronts of the economy," Ibrahim added.

Mohammed Amirul Haque, managing director of Premier Cement Mills, said that the declining trend in LC openings signals a negative outlook for fresh investment.

He said three key reasons are uncertainty surrounding policy support under the interim government, inadequate utility services, and weak governance—for the lack of new investment.

"It appears that entrepreneurs are waiting for political stability and a reduction in the interest rate," said Mohammad Ali, managing director & CEO at Pubali Bank PLC. "Exports also require a jump to see a rise in capital machinery imports."

Ashraf Ahmed, former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said overall, the increased imports indicate a slightly better performance, but the details expose new weaknesses and threats to domestic industry.

"We are witnessing the positive impact of adopting an orthodox and prudent monetary policy—our trade deficit is lower, we are witnessing robust growth in remittances—supported by market-based pricing, which has helped us reduce the current account deficit.

This, however, is coming at the cost of lower growth, lower investment, and slow growth in jobs."

Frustrated, businesses move to hire

FROM PAGE B1
"By signing a non-disclosure agreement, the government opted for obligation over responsibility," said Bhattacharya.

He noted that no partner country had ever provided an NDA document in Bangladesh's history. A non-paper, an informal document without legal force, would have sufficed and conveyed responsibility without binding commitments, he added.

"Under this agreement, even if Bangladesh appoints a lobbyist, the information cannot be shared with them," said Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow at local think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

He said meaningful trade negotiations require an understanding of the partner country's economic outlook.

"The US economy

is gradually losing competitiveness and facing twin deficits—current account and fiscal. The tariff move aims to cut imports, boost domestic investment, and create jobs, but Trump's assumption is unscientific and unsustainable," he said.

Bhattacharya predicted that inflation in the US would rise and that the impact of tariffs would become more visible ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

He criticised the interim government for sidelining stakeholders and experts throughout the process.

Trade in services, which currently benefits the US, should have been part of the conversation, he argued. At the same time, he urged urgent domestic reforms, including export diversification, productivity gains, and stronger institutions.

"There is no instance

where a weak and uncoordinated government successfully negotiated a major trade deal," he said. "Given its lack of political legitimacy, this government should have involved stakeholders from the outset."

Taking a swipe at the government's handling of the situation, Bhattacharya said, "We are moving forward with an innocent, naive government in muddy waters."

Sharif Zahir, managing director of Ananta Group, said, "We have miserably failed diplomatically to reduce the reciprocal tariff of the US, but still 10 days remain, so we should use every possible way, including the Chief Adviser's connection, to reduce it."

If tariffs remain high, US-centric firms may not survive six months, he warned. "More than 10 lakh

people will lose their jobs."

Former finance secretary Mahbub Ahmed acknowledged the government's weak negotiating capacity and called for the inclusion of civil society, experts, and business chambers in the process.

He recalled that similar fears had emerged in the past during the move to a quota-free regime and over the child labour issue. "But the local apparel industry was not destroyed. In fact, it flourished," he said.

Other speakers at the event included Professor Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the CPD; Selim Raian, economics professor at Dhaka University; Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear; and Anwar-Ul-Alam Chowdhury, former president of the BGMEA.

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ICDs to raise

FROM PAGE B1
container to the depot yard, and finally transporting it to the port for shipment.

As per the BICDA announcement, the stuffing package charge for a 20-foot container will rise from Tk 6,187 to Tk 9,900, and for a 40-foot container from Tk 8,250 to Tk 13,200—a 60 percent increase.

Exporters, however, disagree.

BANGLADESH'S COMPETITIVENESS AT STAKE

The country's export sector has been facing multifaceted challenges in recent months, with goods clearance slowing due to poor server performance at customs stations, protests by officials of the revenue board, political uncertainty, and a devastating reciprocal tariff announced by the US.

The landing charge has been raised from Tk 207 per tonne to Tk 270, and the CFS storage charge has been enhanced from Tk 29 to Tk 45.

According to ICD data, in 2024, ICDs handled 7.50 lakh TEUs of export containers, a 13.5 percent increase from the previous year. More than 80 percent of these containers were 40-foot ones.

Under the newly announced rates, the stuffing package charge for a 40-foot export-laden container will rise by Tk 4,950 to Tk 13,200. This means package charges across export containers

could rise by over Tk 300 crore annually, assuming container volumes remain constant.

BICDA leader Sikder said the announced charge hike is very nominal compared to the overall export expenditure. "It would not make any impact on the sector. But it is a must for the survival of the ICDs."

Exporters, however,

shrouds the country's major export earner RMG sector due to higher tariff from the US," Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said.

He said they would sit with BICDA to solve the issue through discussion.

BGMEA Director Syed M Tanvir said the country's export sector would lose competitiveness due to the ICDs' charge hike.

"Though the buyers pay the charges, the exporters would ultimately suffer since the buyers would add up this additional expense in their overall logistics costing," he pointed out.

"The current logistics costs for exporting from Bangladesh are already higher because our exports need additional transport time as we lack deep seaports. Moreover, our export shipments face frequent delays due to problems in ports and customs," said Tanvir.

Khairul Alam Sujan, former vice president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA), said the charge increase by the BICDA unilaterally is unacceptable, especially at a time when uncertainty

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Date : 20.07.2025

Re-Tender Notice No.: 11/2024-2025

An e-Tender has been invited in the national e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of the following works/goods

SL No.	Tender ID	Package No. & Description	Location of the Works/ Supply	Tender/ Proposal Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/ Proposal Closing & Opening Date & Time
1	Tender ID No 1132750; Re-Tender ID No 1114382 (OSTETM)	Package No.: Narail/Outsourcing Manpower:2024-25:W-20 Selection of outsourcing manpower supply firm for engaging of Driver (Vehicle) = 1 Nos, Helper = 1 No, Assistant Cook = 1 No, Security Guard (Chowkidar) = 1 Nos, Cleaner = 3 Nos, Gate Operator = 5 Nos & Khalashi (Canal /Embankment) = 2 Nos total 14 Nos for the office of Narail Water Development Division, BWDB, Narail by outsourcing process during the financial year 2025-2026 & 2026-2027.	Narail District	06.08.2025 15:00 hours	Tender Proposal Closing Date & Time 07.08.2025, 10:00 Tender Proposal Opening Date & Time 07.08.2025, 10:00 hours

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to Banking 16:00 hours on 06.08.2025.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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GD-1619

20.7.2025
(Ovizit Kumar Saha)
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Executive Engineer.

BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD
POWER DIVISION, MINISTRY