

A \$150 Billion Maritime Blueprint: The Policy Imperative for Bangladesh's Economic Sovereignty

Under Captain Kibria's Plan, Bangladesh will become a Maritime Superpower



Captain A K M Golam Kibria
Chairman, MH Global Group
Director, Ocean Shiptrade Pte Ltd – Singapore
Vice President, UODA Trust

For decades, Bangladesh has treated its maritime territory merely as a geographical boundary—not as a source of economic strength. Yet beneath the seabed and across the vast maritime zones of the Bay of Bengal lies an estimated \$150 billion blue economy potential, capable of creating more than 3 million jobs.

The question is—will we remain confined to a coastal mindset, or will we dare to transform into a true maritime power?

Transitioning from a passive coastal state to an effective maritime power is not simply about building infrastructure; it requires a coordinated effort of strategy, policy, human capital development, and global connectivity.

Capital Outflow: A Silent Erosion

Bangladesh is producing skilled seafarers and maritime officers who have secured respectable positions in the global market. However, most revenues from logistics, ship management, insurance, financial services, and maritime legal sectors remain under foreign control.

Every year, a significant portion of freight earnings flows out of the country. We dismantle ships, but we are not leaders in ship operations. We produce officers, but we have not built world-class maritime service institutions. This is not merely a policy gap—it is a waste of economic capacity.

A Three-Pronged Strategy: A Practical Roadmap

First: Establishing dominance in ship chartering.

If Bangladesh can establish 1,000 local chartering companies by 2040, our participation in the global shipping market will multiply. This sector is relatively low-capital but knowledge-intensive—creating high-skilled employment in analysis, brokerage, and logistics management.

Second: Expanding a Bangladesh-flagged fleet.

The target of 1,000 vessels is ambitious but achievable through planned investment, policy support, and international partnerships. Owning ships means retaining freight earnings within the country and strengthening financial sovereignty.

Third: Modernizing the ship recycling industry.

Bangladesh already holds an important position in this sector. With modern technology, environmentally sustainable policies, and adherence to international standards, it can grow into a \$6 billion export industry and eventually evolve into a green shipbuilding hub.

Bangladesh's \$150 Billion Maritime Vision: A Strategic Roadmap by Captain Kibria

Key Strategic Points:

Blue Economy Expansion – Unlocking offshore resources, fisheries, seabed minerals, and marine tourism.

Ship Chartering & Ship Owning Nation – Developing Bangladesh into a global ship-owning and ship-chartering hub.

Maritime Education & Skill Development – Training thousands of young professionals in shipping, logistics, and maritime law.

Port & Logistics Modernization – Transforming ports into regional transshipment and logistics centers.

Global Trade Connectivity – Strategic partnerships with international shipping and commodity trading companies.

Coastal Industrial Growth – Building shipbuilding, repair yards, and coastal economic zones.

Maritime Finance & Insurance Hub – Creating financial and legal infrastructure for global maritime business.

Policy & Governance Reform – Long-term national maritime strategy inspired by global leaders like the Singapore model.

Employment & Economic Growth – Creating millions of jobs and boosting export competitiveness.

Sustainable Ocean Management – Protecting the marine environment while ensuring economic prosperity.

Policy Coordination: Not Fragmentation, But Central Leadership

Such a transformation cannot be achieved through isolated ministries. A powerful National Maritime Council is required to transform Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, and Payra into integrated maritime economic zones; elevate maritime education and research to international standards; and establish hubs for maritime finance, insurance, and legal services.

Various development models around the world are well known—the Korean model, Greek model, Japanese model, United Kingdom model, European model, and Singapore model. Through deep analysis of these successful experiences, Captain A. K. M. Golam Kibria has proposed a unique "Bangladesh Model."

In particular, Singapore has transformed itself into a world-class shipping hub through integrated maritime policy. Similarly, Bangladesh—leveraging its strategic geographic location, vast workforce, rapidly growing market, and marine resource potential—can enter a new era of progress.

The proposed "Bangladesh Model" will integrate comprehensive maritime policy, modern port development, skilled human capital, fair trade systems, and a sustainable blue economy—positioning Bangladesh as a powerful global center of shipping and trade.



Integrating Economy and Humanity

Maritime strategy is not only economic—it is also an expression of humanitarian leadership. The "Global Five-Zero" initiative—an ethical commitment against poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, corruption, and homelessness—was presented at University of Oxford and received international recognition through the initiative of the Dr. Mostafa Hazera Foundation.

The foundation participated in the 80th anniversary event of the United Nations, where Secretary-General António Guterres was present.

Economic strength and social responsibility are not contradictory—they are complementary.

The Call of the Time

The sea is not a luxury—it is Bangladesh's strategic future. The \$150 billion potential is not merely a statistic; it is a test of policy, leadership, and determination.

Captain A. K. M. Golam Kibria has set a target of a \$150 billion maritime economic roadmap and 3 million jobs by 2040—aimed at advancing the struggling economy toward strength, dignity, and global leadership.

Now there is only one question—Is Bangladesh ready to embrace its blue horizon?