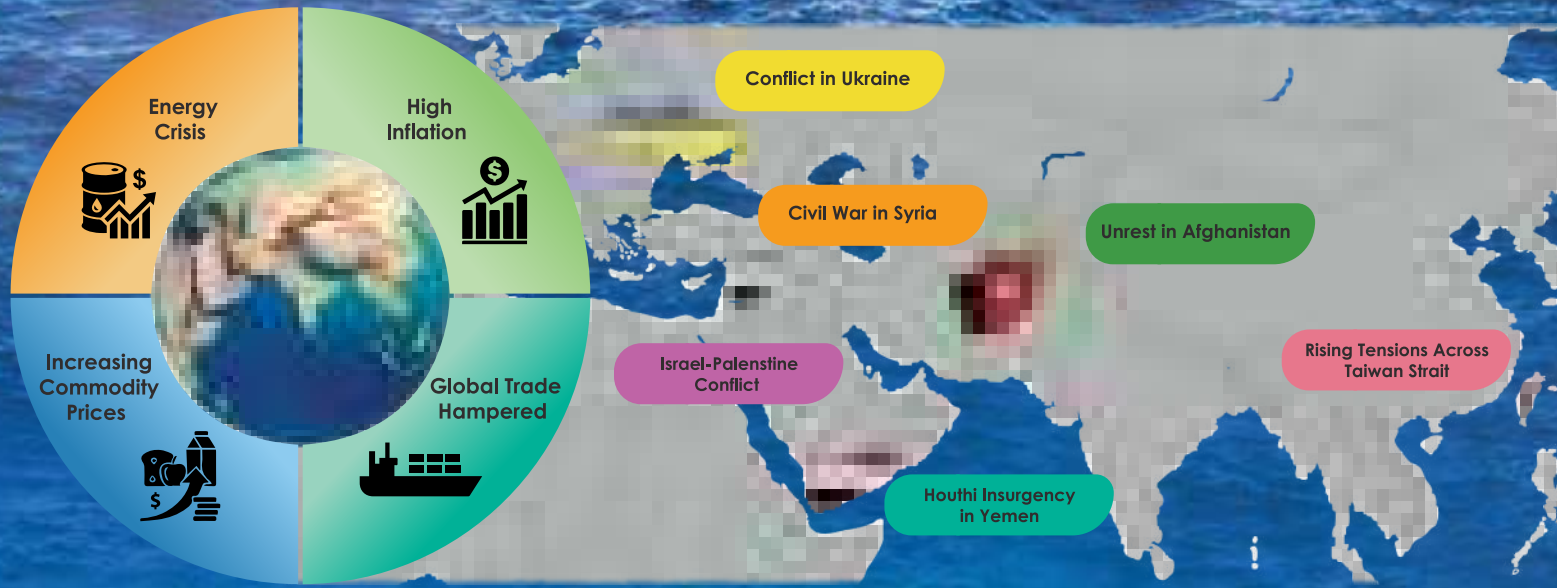




## Geopolitics in an Era of Uncertainty: Navigating through Uncharted Sea



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## Editorial

### Geopolitics in an Era of Uncertainty: Navigating through Uncharted Sea

Wars and conflicts have been a catastrophe for humanity throughout history. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has been a puzzle for experts because of its unprecedented ripple effect. The global ramifications of this conflict have been felt in every corner of the world, and it is projected to get worse in the coming days. The Middle Eastern region has been at the center of the great power struggle for decades. But the conflicts were nowhere near the current one in Ukraine in terms of their trans-border impacts across the globe. In one hand, the spillover effects may be attributed to the nature of interconnectedness in this highly globalized world. On the other hand, the causal analysis might point out the location of the theatre as conflicts in Europe have the innate ability to plunge the whole world into it.

The South Asian region has also been facing the brunt of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The Sri Lankan case has been an early warning to its neighbouring nations, but the turmoil in the neighbourhood is increasingly threatening to be a domestic issue for the countries. The global geopolitical turmoil has triggered uncertainty about the stability of international shipping and global economic recovery. Seaborne trading has never been costlier than ever before, and the consequential impacts can be felt in the skyrocketing prices of commodities. Inflation-hit national economies have been catastrophic for the people around the globe, despite being positioned thousands of miles away from the conflict. Bangladesh has been lauded for its success in possessing the potential to become an economic power in South Asia because of the realization of its development vision. The ongoing global challenges have affected Bangladesh's developmental journey. The ongoing mega projects are intertwined with the global economy; therefore, the future trajectory must be carefully planned and executed. In order to safeguard Bangladesh's national interests and ensure food and energy security, Bangladesh has to venture through complex and ever-changing geopolitical scenarios more cautiously than ever.

In this context, the theme of the present issue of PAAL is titled "Geopolitics in an Era of Uncertainty: Navigating through Uncharted Sea." This issue has been designed to present different aspects of the global challenges and the varying levels of impact on different sectors of Bangladesh. From the conceptual understanding of the geopolitical complexities of the maritime domain to the policy-level implications of the geopolitical challenges, the current issue of PAAL covers a wide range of issues. Changing dynamics, due to the global challenges of different issues like the Rohingya refugee crisis, volatilities in the ocean shipping industry, the development of maritime infrastructures, etc, are discussed by respective subject-matter experts. The current PAAL issue depicts the domestic level reflection of the global challenges due to geopolitical conflicts. Articles also focus on the seaport, technological advancements in the shipping sector, marine resources, etc. Regular sections like BIMRAD Feats, Marine News, and Coastal Window highlighted the most concurrent unique events.

We are convinced that this issue of PAAL will enable us to reach our goal of sharing knowledge and perspectives with our readers. We also wish our efforts will make the readers aware of the global challenges and their impacts on Bangladesh's maritime domain. Indeed, a better tomorrow awaits Bangladesh if we can bring out the best amidst the ongoing global challenges.

Thanking you  
Editorial Board

**“ We want to build Bangladesh as a developed and prosperous country. I think Bangladesh has to step forward keeping friendship with all to this end ”**

- Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

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# Geopolitical Instability: The World under Tension, Recession and Uncertainty

Capt M Minarul Hoque, (H), BCGM, psc, BN



World geopolitics are changing. The nature of geopolitics has shifted drastically, showcasing a complexity that was never seen after WWII. The whole world is reeling from conflicts, diplomatic tension, recession, and instability. The Covid 19 pandemic has paralyzed the world for the last two years. The impact of the pandemic hit really hard and shattered the economies around the world. Since then, the emergency evolved into global public health and economic crisis that affected the \$90 trillion global economy beyond anything experienced in nearly a century. On the heels of a devastating global pandemic that has upended lives and livelihoods alike, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict has dented the hope for smooth recovery. The UN stated that the conflict in Ukraine has severely affected the fragile economic recovery from the Covid pandemic, triggering a devastating humanitarian crisis in Europe while increasing food and commodity prices and globally exacerbating inflationary pressures. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) forecasted that the global economy would pay a hefty price for the conflict in Ukraine; encompassing weaker growth, higher inflation, and potentially long-lasting damage to supply chains.

Though the conflict zone is contained within Ukraine only, the cascading impacts spread worldwide. The prevailing uncertainty is deterring investment and business, and the inflation rate may go up to more than 14%. The conflict is causing financial conditions to squeeze and weaken many economies, and Bangladesh is no exception.

Russia and Ukraine have a long shared history that dates back to more than a millennium to the establishment of the first Slavic state, KyivanRus, in parts of Russia and Ukraine today. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine became an independent country. From the Russian point of view, Ukrainian ties with the West and ambition to join NATO, which would've brought a NATO country alongside its border, posed a dangerous threat to Russian national security. The world witnessed many deadly wars and conflicts in the last 50 years. So, what is exceptional about the Russo-Ukrainian conflict that shattered the whole world? From Falkland to Gulf, Bosnia to Afghanistan, Iraq-Syria-Yemen wars were fought, and some are continuing for decades. But none of these wars had such a severe impact on the global economy. The world has never

experienced so much splitting up in axis in the past. It is an illusion nowadays, whether it is a unipolar or bipolar world. In terms of Military power, there might be some confusion, but in the economic sense, the world is already multipolar.

The Russian military operation in Ukraine which started on February 24, 2022, intensified the geopolitical tensions between the West and Russia, resulting in lower global growth than expected. The uncertainty arising from the outcome of this conflict has disrupted the global supply chain. Most western countries imposed economic sanctions on Russia to weaken its economy. The sanctions and restrictions imposed by the Western countries had a spillover effect on the global economy. Russia is the 11th largest economy in the world. As such, it has strong economic & military ties with many countries. But the prohibition of Russian banks from using the international payments system SWIFT made it impossible to trade with others. Many countries are now searching for an alternative channel and way to keep trade and commerce with Russia. In March 2022, the global inflation rate for the consumer price index reached 9.22%, compared with 7.47% in February 2022. The IMF already warned that the world could soon be on the brink of a global recession as the economies of the United States, China, and Europe slow more sharply than anticipated amid a collision of crises.

Russia is one of the world's top three crude producers and the second-largest natural gas producer. Due to the sanctions, Russia has reduced the supply of gas to Europe, which created a massive energy crisis. Consequently, the price of Crude oil and gas has been soaring across the globe. Energy crises around the world are causing political instability and unrest. The surging energy costs leading to power cuts have sparked strikes and demonstrations in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ghana, Cameroon, Afghanistan, Peru, and many other countries.

The WFP warned that a global food crisis fueled by conflict, climate shocks, and the COVID-19 pandemic is growing because of the ripple effects of the conflict in Ukraine, driving rising prices of food, fuel, and fertilizer. Millions of people across the world are at the risk of being driven into starvation unless action is taken now to respond together and at scale. We need to remember that Russia and Ukraine export one-third of the world's wheat and barley. They are the providers of 70% sunflower oil and a prominent supplier of corn. Amid this crisis, prices of food and commodities are already climbing. Approximately 90% of wheat and other grain from Ukraine are shipped to the world market by sea, which is disrupted due to the prevailing situation. Moscow argues that Western sanctions on its banking and shipping industries make it impossible for Russia to export food and fertilizer and are scaring off foreign shipping companies from carrying it. According to WFP, 690 million people do not have enough to eat, while 130 million additional people risks being pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of the year.

This conflict is causing worldwide disruptions to global trade and investment. Russia's networks to European ports have been cut, and commodity exports to other destinations have been constrained. Ukraine's Black Sea ports are not functional due to this tension, leaving the country few routes for its commodity exports. Air freight between Europe and Asia must now be rerouted to avoid Russian airspace. Rail transit through Russia is slowing due to checks for sanctions compliance, and further rounds of sanctions could risk halting rail transit entirely. Shipping costs have been on the rise. The UNCTAD report says that between February and May 2022, the price paid for transporting dry bulk goods, such as grains increased by nearly 60%. The shipping industry has been affected on multiple fronts. This industry also faces challenges in day-to-day operations, with knock-on effects for the crew, the



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cost and availability of bunker fuel, and the growing threat posed by cyber risk.

This conflict has triggered, not caused, a dramatic new phase in the long-term reshaping of our world. It has underlined preexisting global divisions. USA and EU or the West are more united than ever. On the other hand, few governments outside Europe and North America have been reluctant to censure Russia, and many more have refrained from joining multilateral sanctions.

China has tacitly supported the Kremlin since its February affirmation of a Sino-Russian friendship with "no limits." A few others have backed Russia vocally, among them Belarus and Iran. Bangladesh, India, South Africa, and a few countries have reaffirmed their policy of non-alignment. Beijing's stance on the Russian military operation in Ukraine could define future ties with Washington. Nevertheless, Washington has warned Beijing of consequences should it provide military or financial assistance to Moscow. The US continues to grow pressure on China. The potential flashpoint between US and China in the

a unipolar to a multipolar world, from one global superpower to several great powers. The global impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is also being felt in Bangladesh. Geo-economics increasingly influence modern geopolitics, and Bangladesh's economy heavily depends on Western countries. Collectively, the export earnings of Bangladesh from Russia and Ukraine are less than 2% of the total export earnings. However, Ukraine conflict has affected Bangladesh in three products: the wheat market, vegetable oil and fertilizer. Besides, Bangladesh is also engaged with Russia with a few mega projects like the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and a few Railway projects. So, Bangladesh's response to the Ukraine crisis was a diplomatic persuasion of its long-standing policy driven by its non-alignment stance. Bangladesh always wants to stay at a safe distance from great power races and reaffirm the constitutional vindication of its foreign policy of "Friendship to all and malice towards none."

In many ways, Bangladesh is feeling the heat of this conflict. The business community predicts that the impact will be heavy if this continues for a more extended period. Already we

“  
Today, humanity is just one misunderstanding,  
one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation  
- UN Secretary General António Guterres  
”

South China Sea soared to unprecedented levels after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan. The trip led Beijing to suspend US-China climate talks, cut off some high-level military communication channels, and conduct massive military drills in the South China Sea. So far, this conflict has caused seismic waves radiating from the epicenter and impacting far and wide. Other than these, land and air skirmishes took place between India-China and India-Pakistan. Armenia and Azerbaijan engaged each other over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, triggering tensions of another major war in Europe. NATO expansion with the membership process of Norway and Sweden, QUAD expansion, new momentum of Indo-Pacific Strategy, strengthening CIS and CSTO, and building a bigger BRICS is the sign of power politics and changing horizon of geopolitics. As such, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned, "Today, humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation," at a UN conference on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in New York City.

The evolving contours of modern geopolitics are still in a state of flux, and the conflict in Ukraine heralds the most significant geopolitical shift since the end of the Cold War. The world order has become increasingly volatile, which began a shift from

see a reduction in exports and a rise in import bills. The BPC reported that it is losing about Tk 19 crore per day. With high crude oil prices, the chain effect is being felt through a hike in the prices of gas, fertilizer, and other essentials. The government had to adjust the fuel price to stop the incurring losses of BPC. Rising fuel prices have already had an impact on all commodity prices. Additionally, the cost of other imported products has also gone up significantly. Apparently, it will push the production cost of commodities resulting in higher prices for the consumers. In this context, Bangladesh needs to watch and manage the situation prudently. Pragmatic budget allocation and cautious import and monetary policy may help the country ride out the situation and continue its development. Adequate funds are to be allocated for social safety net programs to address the poor and low-income families. Efforts should be made to utilize funds for ongoing projects properly rather than initiate new ones. The government should carefully use its foreign currency as import payments continue to rise in the uncertain period of conflict and beyond. Finally, prudent diplomacy in this volatile geopolitical environment will be the crux of navigating this rough sea.

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# Geography, Sea Power and Politics: Implications for Bangladesh

Prof. Rashed Uz Zaman



In what he deemed as his magnum opus, *Modern Strategy*, Colin S. Gray (1943–2020), who has a strong claim to being considered the greatest strategic theorist of his generation, argues that along with history and culture, geography is one of those dimensions which dominate strategic theory, analysis, and explanation. Of course, in an age when many deem technology to be the final arbiter of strategy, there are powerful claims that geography is in the process of being dismissed as a dimension with much ability to constrain. In other words, who cares about 'mere' geography when intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) can deliver weapons of mass destruction, or small conventional explosives, essentially with perfect accuracy (a zero circular error probable, CEP) at ranges above 7000 miles? Why waste time and words about the significant influence of brute geography when conflict has expanded in one century from the land and the surface of the sea to encompass the domains of air and space, as well as the

electromagnetic spectrum (EMS), including today the virtuality of cyberspace (Gray, 1999)? However, as the conflict in Ukraine has proved yet again, the geographical dimension of strategy is ever-present and permanent. While geography varies in its specific influence upon particular conflicts at particular times, the 'continued primacy of geography remains.

Writing for PAAL, a publication devoted to raising maritime awareness among the unconverted and reinforcing the conviction of the converted, I cannot help but reiterate the importance of geography for a country like Bangladesh, blessed with access to the sea and a rich but often overlooked, sea-faring tradition. Reverting to Colin S. Gray, his ideas about maritime strategy—that element of strategy that relates to the sea—were enunciated most clearly in his widely read 1992 book *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War*. The recurrent theme in his work is the connected propositions that “superior sea power has provided

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leverage critical for success in strategy and statecraft” and that this remains the case in the conditions of today and the likely ones of tomorrow (Gray, 1992). By sea power (or maritime power, for he tended to use the two phrases interchangeably), Gray meant the capacity to deliver strategic effect by what one does at or from the sea. He was clear that this is not an absolute quality but a relative one that countries or coalitions have to a greater or smaller degree compared with other countries or coalitions. Sea power is not the polar opposite of land, or continental, power but instead its complement. Throughout his book, Gray reminds us about the continuing strategic importance of sea power. Given the need to focus on the effects of maritime preponderance on the land, policy planners should remind themselves constantly that sea power is, with very few exceptions, no more than part of an overall package.

It should be noted that Bangladesh does not aspire to be a large military power, but rather is determined to have formidable forces to safeguard its sovereignty. Bangladesh's foreign policy focuses on promoting international peace while

forty countries live in or around the Indian Ocean. However, despite its vast economic potential and the increasing importance of India, projected to be the world's most populous country in 2023 and growing power in terms of global ambitions and reach, the Indian Ocean was still relatively a tabula rasa in geopolitical terms. China's transformation, which Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues initiated, has enriched the Chinese people and strengthened the country, a mission that had eluded China's leaders for 150 years. And in the process of achieving this goal, Deng presided over a fundamental change of China itself—the nature of its relations with the outside world, its governance system, and its society (Vogel, 2017). South Asia as a region has been affected by the transformation of China. China's rise as an economic giant and its dependence and focus on the Indian Ocean has been widely perceived as leading to an inevitable competition in the arena with consequences for the littorals. Issues such as the movement of ships, bases, geopolitics, maritime strategy, and navies crop up regularly in discussions about the Indian Ocean. Lost in the hype is the old naval adage that bases exist for ships: ships are not maintained for the sake of the base.

*“Sea power has, in a true sense, made the world we live in today and will shape the world we live in tomorrow. The Indian Ocean is what James Stavridis calls ‘The Future Sea’ (Stavridis, 2017), and Bangladesh's geography and the sea are bound to affect the country's foreign policy.”*

safeguarding the country's sovereignty and furthering its interests. My emphasis on Colin Gray's ideas or the conclusions to which he came is to shed light on our understanding of geography, sea power, and strategy. Since the rest of the twenty-first century is touted widely as maritime, a proper appreciation of the nature and importance of geography and sea power should be relevant to our current and future concerns and help shape our foreign and defense policies.

Bangladesh, being an Indian Ocean littoral, cannot afford to ignore how the oceans' geography has shaped nations' destiny (remember the East India Company and Bengal's history!). Sea power has, in a true sense, made the world we live in today and will shape the world we live in tomorrow. The Indian Ocean is what James Stavridis calls ‘The Future Sea’ (Stavridis, 2017), and Bangladesh's geography and the sea are bound to affect the country's foreign policy. The Indian Ocean is a vast body of water – 20 percent of the world's surface and third in size behind the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Across this vast body of water, nearly half of all shipping and containers and nearly 70 percent of all fossil fuel, making it indispensable for the global economy. A third of the world's population in nearly

Naval bases, on their own, command only that portion of the sea that lies within the range of its guns. If there are no ships to protect a base, it becomes a liability, a hostage in the hands of a superior naval fleet that could blockade it off from the rest of the world, wear it down, and occupy it if such a situation arises (Graham, 1972). Thus it is a fallacy to think one can escape geography and formulate foreign policy.

Bangladesh's position is to maintain ties with all major powers. Thus, taking geographic realities into consideration, Bangladesh has maintained close ties with India. It has worked hard on its relations with China, with whom it has investment, trade, infrastructure building, and defense ties. Japan is also a significant source of investment in manufacturing and infrastructure development. The United States is an important business partner interested in building defense ties. For Bangladesh, the coming days will require delicate handling of relations as its attempts to balance development and power contest in South Asia. Geography and sea power will remain powerful elements in such balancing acts.

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# Addressing the Rohingya Crisis: Bangladesh Approaches at Home and Abroad

Prof. Lailufar Yasmin



We share the same sky but not the same land—in the world, where territories determine primary identities for humans and being stateless is considered the worst form of loss of identity. Rohingyas have experienced that in their own country of origin for years as their legit claim to identity was stripped off constitutionally since 1982. Years of persecution against the Rohingyas took their worst form in August 2017, which led to a mass exodus of the Rohingyas to the only other place where they could seek refuge, that is, in Bangladesh.

A country of 50 years, Bangladesh had its fair share of crises, but mostly of natural origin; it is a delta hosting the confluence of three big rivers, and the Bay of Bengal is prone to natural disasters. Bangladesh, however, had seldom experienced artificial crises of the type that the exodus of Rohingyas has unfolded—an additional 1.1 million population in the country of foreign origin, which requires unprecedented management. Rohingyas have been crossing on this side of the border since

before the independence of Bangladesh. Independent Bangladesh has seen several phases of influxes of Rohingyas, which previously have been dealt the help of the international community. The influx of 2017 was entirely different than before—both in terms of volume and nature. One can argue that the systemic volatility and the gaps in the international order lead to rule-breaking tendencies of rogue countries, and Myanmar's military junta was no exception. The repression of Rohingyas happened when great powers were busy securing their national interests. Despite consensus on the rules-based international order, the idea was often selectively applied. While Bangladesh has acquired newfound strategic importance, thanks to its third neighbor, the Bay of Bengal, it seems that how the Rohingya issue should be approached is slowly changing in favor of Bangladesh.

Several developments have taken place in recent times, which need to be evaluated in their proper perspective. Bangladesh

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has successfully internationalized the Rohingya issue. It has been able to make a sound case internationally about the gravity of the problem, that it is not only Bangladesh's problem, and that the international community must have to shoulder the responsibilities of the cost of this prolonged humanitarian crisis. As the Gambia took the case of Myanmar allegedly violating provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also known as the Geneva Convention, against the Rohingyas living in the Arakan Province, the issue has received a further impetus. One must not take this lightly by arguing that the ICJ has no implementing authority. It needs to consider the nature of emerging international consensus on this issue irrespective of their national policies on the Rohingya issue—that is, the unanimous acceptance of the identity of the Rohingyas in the ICJ proceedings and the verdict. As the Court consisted of a Myanmar judge as well, this shows that the Rohingyas' primary demand for the recognition of their identity has been heard and accepted by the international community. This case, with Myanmar referring to the Rohingyas as 'Arakanese Muslims', shows the political maneuvering of Myanmar on multiple levels. First, identifying Rohingyas as Arakanese Muslims is the first international step for Myanmar to accept Rohingyas as Myanmar nationals.



On the other hand, one must not overlook the political and strategic games associated with this particular approach adopted by the country. This was an attempt to cash on global Islamophobia by Myanmar and decline to accept the reality that not all Rohingyas are Muslims. Rohingya Christians and Hindus have also fled to Bangladesh, being persecuted by the Tatmadaw, the Myanmar military junta. However, Bangladesh has not let Myanmar cash on propagating this idea, nor did the persecuted Rohingyas. Rohingyas belonging to other faiths do not shy away from expressing their religious identities and establishing their voice in the process of repatriation to their homeland.

This brings us to the issue of repatriation. Bangladesh has made it clear that it wants sustainable and meaningful repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar. For this, Bangladesh is seeking multilateral cooperation. Its development partners,

such as the United States (US), Japan and China, and the European Union (EU)—all have their respective roles to play. The US has taken a strong stand against the Myanmar military junta by declaring the atrocities committed against the Rohingyas comparable to Holocaust and other genocidal activities and thus, referring to mass atrocities against the Rohingyas as 'genocide'. To further the cause, the US has also sanctioned Myanmar business people and a few members of the Myanmar military. This act shows that the US is gradually taking a solid stance on genocidal activities against the Rohingyas by the Myanmar military. Japan and other international actors are also slowly but surely paying attention to the mass violence against the Rohingyas indiscriminately and working to find a durable solution. The United Nations (UN), which has identified violence against Rohingyas as 'textbook examples of genocide,' has taken up the Rohingya issue as one of its priority areas.

Bangladesh's handling of the Rohingyas living in the country has also been laudable. Bangladesh provided shelter, security, and voices to the Rohingyas, and it has also created opportunities for Rohingya women and young girls and boys, who were traditionally excluded from earning their livelihood and learning how to make a difference. The approach was taken by the Bangladesh authority in involving women and youth in community-level engagements and programs. This can act as an early-warning system in the case of an outbreak of health-related vulnerabilities or social unrest, which have transcended the traditional roles in their culture. In the long run, this will help break the gender barrier in a society where the hierarchical relationship between men and women exists, and they are often not allowed to interact with each other in the public domain. That young boys and girls are given opportunities to work together would bring about changes in how gender relations are perceived and how they can think about furthering this to other spheres of interactions. This is more so in the case of Bhashan Char, where one can see how the involvement of local youth with the Bangladesh authority has created a bridge and, therefore, understanding each other's requirements and priorities. This also works to identify under the circumstances what the 'real time' needs, short-term and long-term needs. There is little doubt that this connecting process between the Rohingyas and Bangladesh authorities shall be as vital as the repatriation processes begin. For Bangladesh, it has been unhesitatingly communicated to the international community that repatriation is the priority. As Professor Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University has pointed out, there is no doubt that repatriation must take place while we must also realize "time is relative, but it has to be done." One must realize that any international issue—irrespective of its merit or complexity—requires time and patience to resolve. No matter how small it may seem at first sight, any step must be connected with the larger picture to make sense of it.

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# The \$100 Trillion World Economy

## GLOBAL GDP 2022

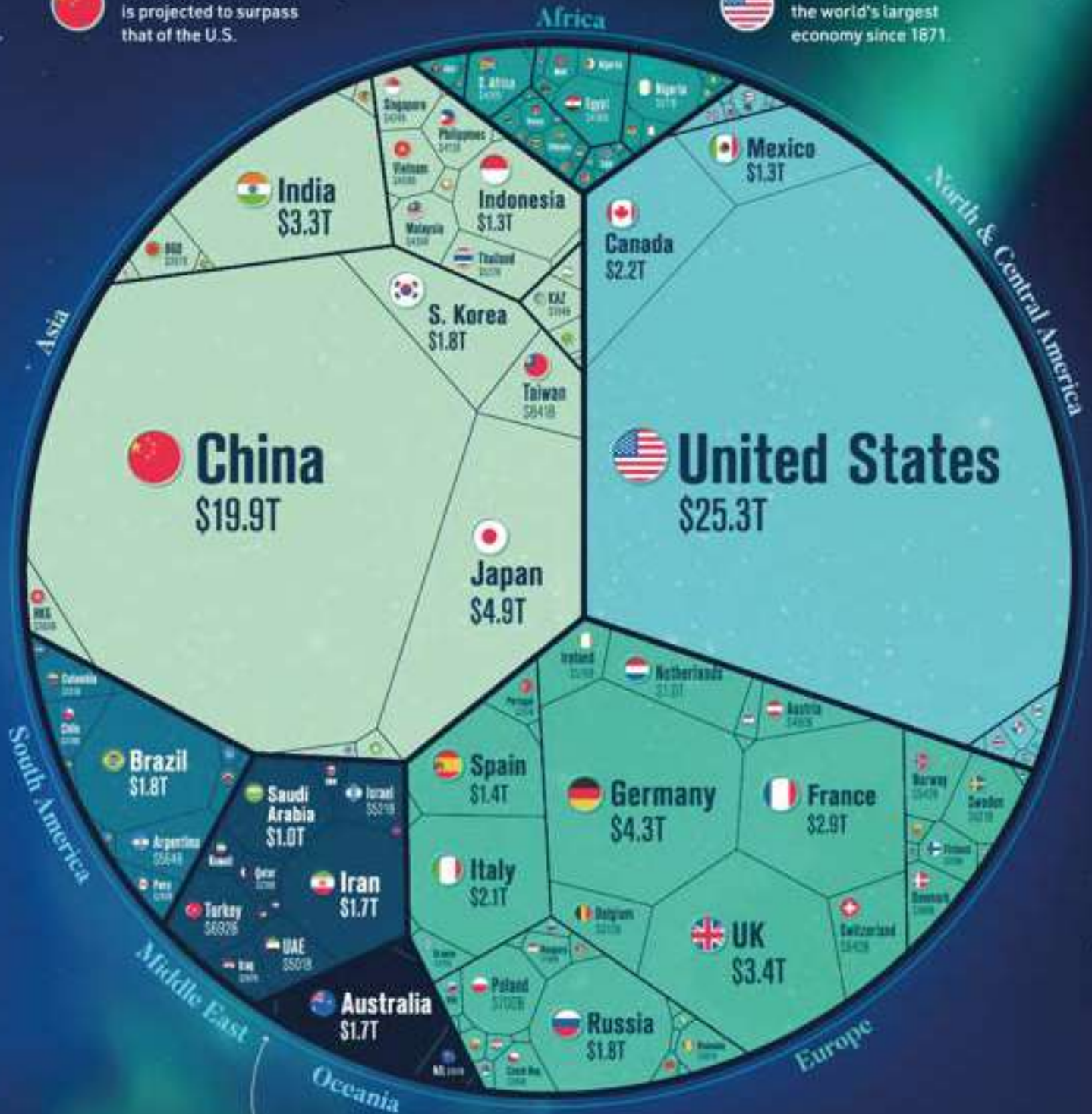
Despite conflict and looming stagflation, the global economy will hit an impressive new milestone, reaching **\$104 trillion**, according to the latest IMF projections for end of year.



By 2030, **China's** GDP is projected to surpass that of the U.S.



The **U.S.** has been the world's largest economy since 1871.



Many of the world's smallest economies are located in the Oceania region, such as **Tuvalu** with a GDP of \$66 million.



**Ireland** is expected to be the fastest growing economy in the Eurozone, with a 5.2% increase this year.

# Russia-Ukraine Conflict: China's Geopolitical and Goeconomic Scoop

Cdre Md. Abdur Razzak, NUP, ndc, psc, MPhil, BN (retd)



Russia's military operation in Ukraine started on 24 February 2022. Europe is in turmoil, NATO is expanding. It is gearing up preparedness to confront Russia. A wider European war is at risk. Europe is at the crossroads of long-lasting trouble. At this delicate geopolitical juncture, China, the Asian powerhouse and the ally of Russia, have remained coolly elusive. China's responses match Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy dictum, "Observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs smoothly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile, and never claim leadership."

Since the early stage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, China has kept itself limited to issuing messages in diplomatic subtlety blaming the West, especially the USA, for luring Ukraine to join NATO, ignoring Russia's concern for security and pulling it into the tension; urging conflicting parties to observe maximum restraint; backing de-escalation of the conflict and so forth. But the situation continued to worsen.

US President Joe Biden, in anticipation of China's military role in support of Russia, warned Xi Zin Ping of the consequences of coming to Russia's aid and reminded him of the degrees of

the Chinese economy's dependence on the West. Biden did not elaborate on 'China's aid' to Russia. Understandably, he might have meant military material support, which Russia requested. China has not committed military aid to Russia. It did not condemn Russia for military operation in Ukraine. China refrained from voting in the UN General Assembly criticizing Russia. In the UNSC, China voted in favour of a Russian-drafted resolution on "humanitarian aid access to Ukraine", which the remaining 13 members of the Council abstained as the draft did not condemn Russia.

It is incredibly tricky to bet if China will involve militarily, even indirectly. So far, it has not; instead, it is continuing trade and economic engagements with Russia. China seems to be endeavouring a triangular geopolitical and goeconomic balance with Russia, NATO member countries and the USA.

The West has piled up sanctions against Russia. Russia needs money to fund its military campaign. To offset the adverse impact of sanctions, Russia reduced oil prices. This conflict has opened opportunities for large economies like China and India as well as smaller economies. China's import of oil from Russia

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increased by 55%. In the first 100 days of the military operation, China became the largest importer of Russian crude oil, worth USD 13.2 billion, up by 55% relative to 2021. NATO member countries in Europe are receiving Russian oil and gas contrary to sanctions they imposed upon Russia, as they could not do without Russian energy supplies. They are considering putting a price cap on Russian oil and gas imports into NATO member countries and other non-tariff barriers. Trade between Russia and NATO members could continue for critical resources despite animosity and sanctions.

China has a couple of sensitive issues with the USA in its backyard. Taiwan, Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea are long-standing problems. Contending parties presumably have been at 'State-1' readiness. Even an inadvertent error could trigger catastrophic consequences. Besides militaristic issues, China and USA were at a trade war beginning in 2018, intensified through 2019 and subsided after Donald Trump left office, but the cloud hung over.

The economic/trade war seems to have resurfaced in intensity on a global spectrum with new complexities after the USA

worldwide could be turning to Yuan to trade with Russia and as an alternative currency to the dollar. Subash Chandra Garg, a former Indian economic affairs Secretary, said, "if the rupee-yuan-ruble route turns out to be favourable, the businesses have every reason and incentive to switch over. This is likely to happen more." "Yuan-ruble trade volumes have surged 1,067% since the beginning of the conflict, putting pressure on the dollar's reserve currency status. Central banks around the world are increasing Yuan reserve." China is discussing with more countries on alternative currencies to settle international trade.

Saudi Arabia and China have discussed the Yuan-based oil deal. Myanmar and China have accepted the Yuan as an official settlement currency in border trade, gradually expanding to maritime trade. Many countries faced political challenges for their attempt to have energy trade agreements in Ruble, which many governments worldwide could have noted as an exemplary call.

'In 2019, approximately 90 percent of foreign-exchange transactions were in the dollar compared to just over 4 percent

*“China’s responses match Deng Xiaoping’s foreign policy dictum, “Observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs smoothly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile, and never claim leadership.”*

blocked Russia’s 600 billion dollars held in US banks and excluded Russia from the global financial system controlled by the West. Freezing others’ assets by the major powers is not new. Such measures were inflicted upon smaller countries and individuals. But actions against Russia seem to be changing old settings.

Countries across the globe might have viewed the US’ economic clash with Russia and exclusion from the global financial system as a forewarning. Russia retaliated with the Ruble as the official settlement currency in bilateral energy trade with Europe. NATO members conceded Russia’s terms on energy trade.

Countries and enterprises worldwide might have been perturbed by the West’s dominance over the international financial systems. But alternative options were also available. India’s largest cement maker Ultra Tech has paid 172 million Yuan for the import of 157,000 tons of Russian coal. More businesses

for the Yuan, per Bank for International Settlements’ indicates the scale of China’s dependence on the dollar that China has to find an alternative to the dollar. China, Chile, Hongkong, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are building up a Yuan reserve of 75 billion with the Bank for International Settlements. China is reportedly creating an alternative global financial system driven by the Yuan.

Last but not least, the post-pandemic world is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic days after two years of global socio-economic downturn. So in the post-Russia-Ukraine conflict, the global financial system is unlikely to return to the pre-conflict scheme. In the post-Russia-Ukraine conflict, the world might have to deal with two financial systems in the settlement of international trade. China could lead a system alternative to the dollar.

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# Current Turbulence in the Shipping Sector Keeps Warning for Tougher Preparations Ahead

R Adm A S M Abdul Baten, (E), BSP, ndc, psc, PhD, BN (ret'd)



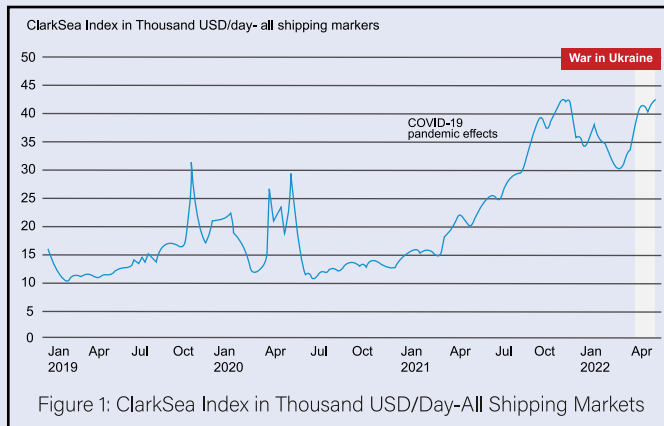
COVID-19 pandemic brought foremost challenges for the world's people in all sectors, including maritime trade and commerce. This has resulted in port congestion, higher freight fees, and longer transit times. When the nations could get some relief from this deadly disease with the application of newly invented vaccines, the Russia-Ukraine conflict appeared with new miseries for developing countries. There have been additional pressures on the shipping industry, affecting all related businesses in the consumer market. Concurrent with the new threats worldwide, there has been a warning by the United Nations (UN) specialized agency, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) about a possible escalation of shipping costs along with inflationary effects (IMF, 2022). In reality, the situation is getting worse day by day, and managers/ owners need to learn how to adjust and survive.

Bangladesh has been prospering with a slow stride in the shipping sector as a growing maritime economy. There has been an exciting development in the shipping sector, with a few new entrepreneurs joining the business. The number of total flag carriers in the last two years rose to a record high

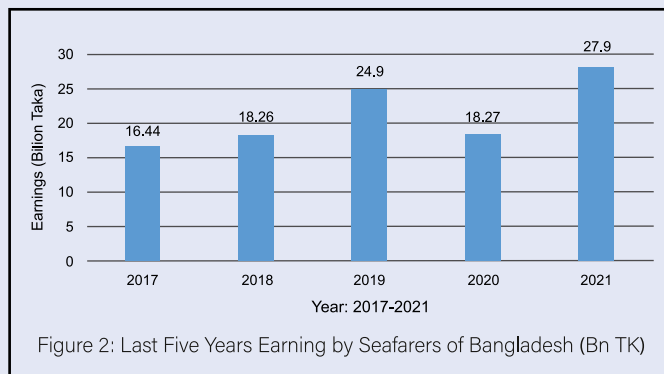
(80+) at present, having with total GRT of 2.7 m MT. The concerned ministries of the government deserve credit for rendering necessary support, although all owners' requirements are not fully met as yet.

The impact of COVID-19 on the shipping sector has shaken all areas of activity. The first impact was on global crew change. Crews are usually changed approximately every after six months. Still, during the pandemic situation, crews had to stay on board for from nine to twelve months or even more, which affected their morale on one side and incurred additional costs to owners. Some international calling ports imposed added restrictions on ships from 7 to 21 days. Cost of ship maintenance and repair enhanced, together with added dry-docking cost. Quality of maintenance and repair was also affected due to minimum or poor supervision along with increased duration. Global cargo movement influences the resulting direct commercial impact on shipping. The threat due to Covid-19 is not yet complete. New Chinese towns were locked down with the closure of factories even at the end of July 2022. Before the complete extermination of the virus, the Russia-

Ukraine conflict has come on to the world's geopolitical stage. Russia and Ukraine are trading partners of Bangladesh. Export earnings from Russia have been increasing over the last five years. Though the export earnings of Bangladesh from Russia and Ukraine are less than 2% of the total export earnings, if the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues, Bangladesh may be deprived of these export earnings. Figure 1 shows the Clark Sea Index for all shipping markets during two crises. The cumulative effect of rising shipping costs is already sensed everywhere globally.



Seafarers of Bangladesh earn foreign currency for the country, which is essential. Foreign currency earnings by the seafarers were on the rise before the pandemic and dropped by 20 % in 2020 and again took a positive gradient after 2021. It is worrying that the total number of sailors is nearly half of the total number of officers employed at sea, and earnings by the officers are almost twelve times that the sailors earn. The problem is foreign vessels' owners are still reluctant to employ sailors from Bangladesh because of several issues which need to be addressed seriously by the concerned authority. The last five years of earnings of seafarers are shown in Figure 2. The total amount could have been much higher if our contribution of seafarers in the international market could have been substantially increased. Currently, the total representation of Bangladesh Seafarers in the global maritime market is less than 1%.

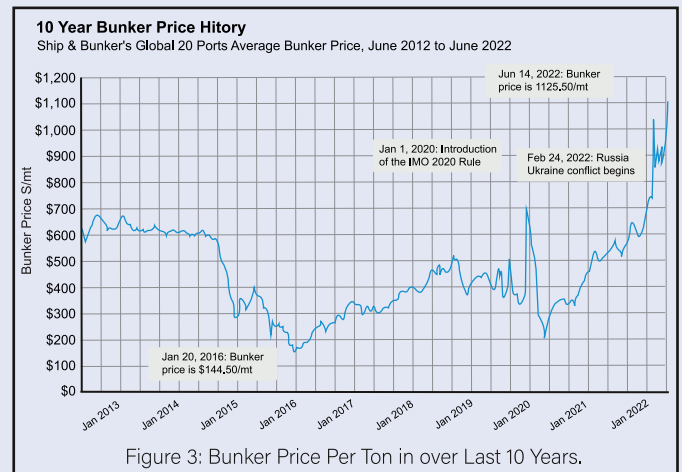


The Ukraine conflict set off a chain reaction in the global economy. The worst situation has been the escalation of fuel price, where the price of bunker fuel has remarkably increased.

The introduction of the IMO 2020 Rule also caused rising fuel costs, which had to be managed under challenging conditions. The daily price of VLSFO has been chiefly growing since the beginning of January 2022. On 19 Jul, 2022, the price of VLSFO stood at 968.5 U.S. dollars per metric ton. Figure 3 shows the trend of fuel price rise over the last 10 years (Ship & Bunker, 2022).

The shipping industry has been recently affected on several frontages, with the loss/injury of life and loss/damage of vessels in the Black Sea, disruption to trade with Russia and Ukraine, and the growing burden of sanctions. Bangladesh's government is very concerned about the loss of valuable life and damage to vessels which should not happen anymore. The industry also faces challenges in day-to-day operations, with cumulative effects on a crew, the cost and availability of bunker fuel, and the growing cyber threats.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) opined that the conflict around the Black sea zone had raised global vessel demand and the cost of shipping. The same authority urged continued collaboration among vessel's flag states, port states, and other actors in the shipping industry to maintain all necessary services, including bunkering supplies, health services for crews, and certification of regulatory compliance, with particular emphasis on the international support for developing countries. The cost of shipping a container on the world's transoceanic trade routes increased seven-fold in the 18 months following March 2020, while shipping bulk commodities spiked even more.

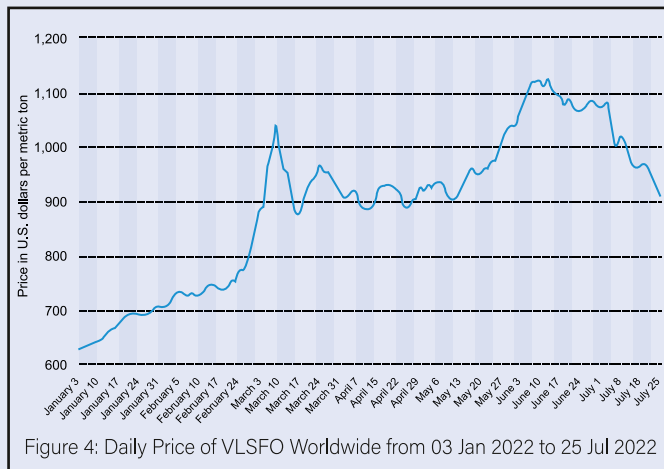


The daily price of very low sulfur fuel oil (VLSFO) worldwide from January 2022 to July 2022 (in U.S. dollars per metric ton) is shown in Figure 4 (Statista, 2022). Panic now prevails among new entrepreneurs, and some are hesitant to invest more in the turbulent shipping sector for longer.

COVID-19 outbreaks are still disrupting ports in China. Big shipping firms have ordered a record volume of new, supersized container vessels, most won't come for service until 2023 or 2024. Many of the shipbuilding yards are already booked up to 2025. Shipping firms are locking in long-term leases to take advantage of price hikes. That results in consumers



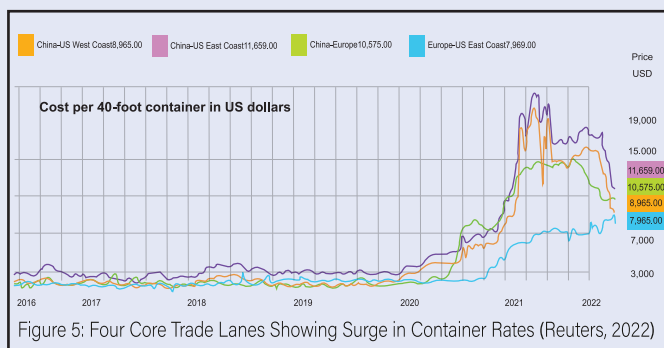
could carry on paying the price for the surge in costs against new ships on order come into service.



Shipping container rates have surged since late 2020 as COVID-19 restrictions eased (Figure 5). Again high shipping costs drive up inflation worldwide. Old container ships have been sold and chartered at record prices.

The disruption to world trade caused by pandemic lockdowns and a shortage of new cargo vessels has also pushed freight rates for aging container ships to record highs. Marine insurance policies generally exclude the seizure of ships or physical damage caused by war or tension short of war, such as damage from sea mines or occurrences on vessels. Yet, most cautious ship possessors would purchase additional war insurance, covering such losses for an additional premium for a limited period. Again, insurers are often unable to pay claims covered by sanctions, which is to be held in mind too.

Bangladesh is already getting pressure through high import payments for most of the essentials for the industry and agriculture sector, which are transported by sea. The shipping sector may continue to remain stormy, and the owners and operators have to remain resilient as they have been in the past to survive in the industry.



The government support in the form of framing conducive policies and regulations for the benefit of the owners would enable this promising industry to face probable new challenges which may come across. These may include tax cuts, cash incentives (quick funding) with low interests, and long-term payments.

Concerned departments are still resolving a few bottlenecks in registering and buying new vessels. The registration procedure should be quicker and similar to those of the established maritime states who are successful in business. Moreover, crew certification and documentation procedures need to be quick and smooth. Strategies must be formulated about image building and acceptance of our sailors worldwide. This will ensure more earnings from foreign exchange. Masters and operators need to be trained to manoeuvre safely in disturbed waters in case of new threats, including cyber risks.

Owning ocean-going vessels is not simple as it involves higher capital expenditure (and possibly interest burden if the purchase has been financed via loans or debt). This also involves higher fixed costs – to be incurred even when the markets are down and there is insufficient cargo. It is thus essential that the owners get support from the government to tackle the difficult situation. Moreover, endeavors must receive sufficient international support for developing countries to meet challenges successfully during war situations and issues posed by pandemics and the climate crisis.

Shipping has always been a complex and indispensable business for the benefit of humanity. The industry is currently passing through a turbulent phase of world geopolitics. To survive successfully in this important sector of maritime trade, it is prudent to maintain wise and cautious management with a skilled workforce for each shipping company. The company management of respective businesses must be aware of the available national and international rules and regulations. They need a sufficiently educated and trained workforce to feel comfortable in meeting all challenges. Without people knowing maritime trade, maritime economics, and technical know-how, it isn't easy to yield competitive advantages from the market and frame future business strategies for survival and success. Suppose the conflict escalates beyond Russia and Ukraine's borders, which a conscious mind would never expect. In that case, it will cause devastating consequences to the world, and international shipping would first be affected. Peace-loving people would always urge for a tension-free shipping market, while policymakers must be prepared for new strategies to meet every new challenge.

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# A Commentary on Bangladesh's Need for a Maritime Doctrine

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan



Bangladesh is at a geopolitical crossroads. Understanding geopolitics from the prism of Dhaka has never been as complex as ever in its recent history. The world has been witnessing paradigm-altering events in Ukraine and Taiwan with apprehension, dismal political and diplomatic limitations, and a fear of the return of the Cold War. These uncertainties come with new realities infused by new tools like algorithms, artificial intelligence, and unmanned and biological technologies. Hence, new political world order is in the making, led by two distinct but fluid blocs – the US and its allies and China and its comrades. The great power rivalries have shaken the foundations of multilateralism, liberal political order, and international stability – both in the forms of strategic landscape and financial architecture. The conflict in Ukraine has caused a large humanitarian crisis that has generated convulsion across Europe and on supranational institutions like NATO and the EU. Beijing and Washington's response to the Taiwan crisis has sent a clear message of polarization that

can make the Indo-Pacific region susceptible to the global power struggle for power.

These crises have come at a moment when the adverse aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic persists across the continents, and its residual effects keep the global economy fragile. The global politics over energy supply and food, the Asian regional geopolitical environment, including the economic collapse in Sri Lanka, the Sino-Indian tensions, the complex US-Pakistan-Chinese approach to dealing with Taliban 2.0, and the competing strategic interests of the Chinese and the American power blocs toward the Bay of Bengal have made the regional socio-economic stability volatile. Paradoxically, we also witness an escalation in military expenditures among the major powers despite the economic slowdown. These rapid changes denote that the relationship among the contentious geostrategic rivals will arguably continue to reshape the stability dynamics over the coming years. Unpredictable but intensified strategic competitions geared

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toward defense counter-balancing and greater investments in strategic industries will remain at the core of the Indo-Pacific military and diplomatic engagements (Mucha, 2022).

While the world is now struggling with multiple crises or perhaps unfolding new threats, we are seeing responses from the non-state actors intensifying too. Cyber threats and increasing extremism in politics, ethno-identity, and religion heavily dominate the political and security discourses. Bangladesh hosts a total of 980,000 Rohingyas who fled the genocide committed by ethno-nationalist Tatmadaw in August 2017 (UNHCR, 2022). Unfortunately, the global powers became divided on responding to ethnic cleansing and genocide committed in Myanmar. The state of Rakhine, bordering Bangladesh, China, the Indian Northeastern region, and the Bay of Bengal, is a geopolitical spindle between South and South Asia. Hence, it is a vital point of interest for the global powers competing for geostrategic and geoeconomic footing in the Indo-Pacific waters.

However, Myanmar's volatility and the global power rivalries in and around the Bay of Bengal refer to the making of an arc of stability from the coasts of Thailand to Bangladesh to India to the islands of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The binding domain here is the Bay of Bengal. The former US Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Stephen Biegun, during his visit to Dhaka in October 2020, labeled Bangladesh as a "centerpiece" to the US engagement in the Indo-pacific region (Khan, 2021). The Japanese Ambassador to Dhaka Ito Naoki views Bangladesh as "located in the Bay of Bengal" as "a vital country in geopolitical terms." The Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka, Li Jiming, stressed the People's Liberation Army and Bangladesh Armed Forces continued engagement to "write a new chapter on safeguarding world peace & development and building a community with a shared future for mankind" (Jiming, 2022). These statements reflect intensified geostrategic interests of the global and regional powers evolving around the Bay of Bengal.

To understand the escalating geostrategic tensions further in Bangladesh's backyard, one may note that the much-debated Hambantota port and the Colombo port city came under the major powers' foreign and military policy radar. In August 2022, Sri Lanka asked China to defer the planned visit of a Chinese survey ship to the island country after an objection from India, and "India worries that the Chinese-built and leased port of Hambantota will be used by China as a military base in India's backyard" (Reuters, 2022). While the Chinese survey ship Yuan Wang 5 has the legal right to dock at Hambantota, the Maldives government has allowed five Indian survey vessels in the Maldivian waters to conduct a joint hydrographic survey (Avas, 2022). The presence and counter presence of maritime tools will continue to assert pressure on Bangladesh's defense posture and in its pursuit to ensure a safe, sustainable, and resourceful Bay of Bengal. Here, the political concerns over the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy and the alliance like Quad factor in.

Bangladesh has not positioned itself as a member of any strategic alliances yet. The prime intention behind the neutrality

is to transform the Bay of Bengal into a lucrative investment destination by retaining absolute "strategic autonomy" over its maritime territory (Khan, 2021). Despite Bangladesh's peaceful defensive and collaborative postures, Myanmar's Tatmadaw (the military junta in power) continues to remain a significant source of national security threat to Bangladesh. Myanmar has acquired a Russian-built Kilo Class submarine. Therefore, Bangladesh needs to strengthen its armed forces, more precisely the naval forces, to deter and diffuse threats of military escalations from the neighborhood or non-state and insurgent activities in the Rakhine state. Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated that "the government was very much cautious to avert any kind of war with Bangladesh's neighbor despite repeated provocations from Myanmar." The Honorable Prime Minister further mentioned: "Our nearest neighbor, at one point, showed such an attitude that there will be a war with us" (UNB, 2017).

The Bay of Bengal has become a critically potential source of sustainable energy and food security. It is a crucial supply line vital for Bangladesh's graduation to the Least Developed Country (LDC) category in 2026. Bangladesh's foreign and economic policies are required to intensify investment, of course, by ensuring environmental sustainability and the safety of the marine ecosystems. We must not forget that the International Seabed Authority (ISA) has entered into 15-year contracts with 22 contractors to explore resources available in the deep seabed between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans (ISA, 2019). That means the human activities, oceanic governance, or deployment of new and classified technologies will significantly influence inter-state relations, resource competition, and political geography centering around the seas. Henceforth, rethinking Bangladesh's political and security approaches toward the Bay of Bengal is now a critical necessity for strategic thinkers.

As we speak about rethinking territorial waters, the polarization over the governance of the seas is intensifying. The significant naval powers are rethinking their maritime doctrines and capabilities. Bangladesh requires to develop its maritime doctrine based on the aforementioned fluidities in the international strategic landscape. Bangladesh's doctrine should, therefore, focus on the future and interlinked dimensions of naval principles, capabilities, and engagement in peace and conflict. To further exercise strategic autonomy, the government may be required to expand Bangladesh's naval capabilities by increasing its strengths in ballistic missile submarines and transforming its conventional naval capabilities into strategic deterrence capacity. One may recall Michael Brown's epic comment: "Whether a weapon is offensive or defensive depends on the situation in which it is used" (Brown, 2004). Therefore, a well-thought-out maritime doctrine will give the nation a better sense of security and strategic superiority in the coming years.

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# Geopolitics of Oil and Gas – Bangladesh Perspective

Prof. Md. Sakawat Hossain



## Introduction

Oil and gas (i.e., energy) are the primary drivers of economic activity, global politics, and international relations; today, as they have been for the past century, From Moscow to Kyiv, Europe to North America, and the Middle East to Asia, recent dissensions show that local and regional conflicts that would have been possibly managed by regional powers have now intricately involved some of the most powerful countries in the world and caused global attention and interest. From local to regional to global, the recent Ukrainian crisis is a classic example of when, how, and why energy is a fundamental indicator of the global geopolitical matrix and how it continues to control national power, security, and stability. For the energy importing country, the availability of oil and gas and price fluctuation significantly control international security, political stability, and economic growth prospects. For the energy exporting country, the rate of production, supply, and pricing is not an independent issue but instead controlled by the international organizations (e.g., OPEC, OAPEC, GECF, IEA, UN), and influential countries (e.g., US, Russia) through the use of subsidies, tariffs/additional taxes, and embargoes/sanctions. Presently most advanced and developed economies are desperately working to harness renewable energy as an alternative source. But still, the developing countries (e.g., Bangladesh) are continuing to rely heavily on relatively cheaper fossil-fuel-based energy sources (i.e., oil and gas) to

increase their prospects of economic growth, at least for another decade to come. As economies and standards of living in both developed and emerging countries continue to grow, by 2035, global energy demand is expected to rise by one-third. Until now, the architecture of global energy security has been designed to satisfy the necessities of the European and North American markets. However, as nearly half of the world's urban population will be hosted by Asia in the near future, with a concomitant increase in energy consumption, the architecture of energy security will gradually shift to this region and have many significant geopolitical implications.

## Oil and Gas Pricing

The domestic and international energy prices are determined by a complex interplay of the rate of production, demand, supply networks, economics, subsidies, tariffs, embargoes, geopolitics, and technological development. It is also believed that global energy prices are vital economic indicators for a country as they heavily affect industry production costs, purchasing power and inflation, international security, political stability, and geopolitics. The energy dependence of the world economy has become a matter of international politics, security, and global economic importance. Since the 1960s, oil-exporting countries (i.e., Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC) set crude oil prices. Crude oil and

natural gas futures joined the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) in 1983 and 1990 and were traded like other commodities. In general, the slide in energy prices depends on many factors, like slowing economic growth globally, increased production, decreased demands for goods, and disagreement and refusal of OPEC countries to help stabilize the price by cutting production. During the COVID pandemic in April 2020, the oil price dropped below zero to -\$37 per barrel for the first time in oil price history. It happened due to the depletion of consumer demand, increased supply, and drove up demand for oil storage due to disagreement of the OPEC countries, specifically Saudi Arabia and Russia, on oil production reduction. Based on the quality and locations of oil and gas, price benchmarks are used in the energy industry to give buyers a way to value this commodity. The main benchmarks used in the energy industry are Brent Blend, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), Dubai/Oman, and Henry Hub. A few countries and international organizations also influence the domestic and international prices of oil and gas through the selective use of subsidies, tariffs, and embargoes.

Since the Russia-Ukraine conflict from February 2022, the global geopolitics of oil and gas changed abruptly. Although Russia has been sanctioned by many western countries and condemned the military operation in Ukraine, many European countries remain deeply dependent on Russian energy. As Russia started to reduce supply to the European market, oil and gas prices soared significantly in the global market amidst fears around energy security. Higher energy prices have started to cripple the world economy and create a looming recession, specifically in developing countries.

Bangladesh depends heavily on gas for electricity generation, running the industry, transportation, and domestic cooking, 75%

of this gas comes from local gas fields, and the remaining 25% is imported as LNG. The imported LNG is purchased from two different sources: (i) At an agreed-upon price under long-term contracts from the Qatargas and Oman Trading International (OQ), and ii) at a highly fluctuating price from the spot market. The price of the per unit gas (million British thermal units, MMBTU) produced locally, imported under long-term contract, and spot market is about 2, 11, and 30 USD, respectively. Although LNG purchased from the spot market is a small amount compared to the total imported LNG, its cost is still significantly higher. Considering the current situation of Bangladesh's economy, Petrobangla tries to avoid purchasing LNG from the spot market to reduce the financial burden and opt for procuring it under long-term contracts. But the Qatargas and OQ cannot reciprocate at this moment due to their tight long-term commitments with other buyers worldwide. Therefore, the only viable options remain to increase the local production through enhancing production from the existing wells, working over the old and abandoned wells, and drilling new wells. Similarly, Bangladesh imports around 91-92% of oil under the long-term government-to-government agreements from Saudi Aramco and the United Arab Emirates. The remaining 8-9% is sourced from the locally produced condensate as a bi-product of gas.

## Geopolitics of Oil and Gas

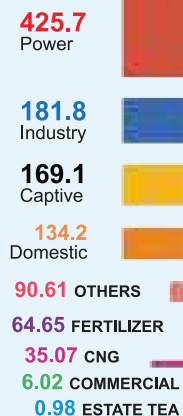
For decades, the geopolitics of oil and gas have profoundly shaped global politics. It can be regarded as resulting from the energy balance and power dynamics among energy exporters and importers, supply networks (e.g., pipeline), energy security, territorial influence and power, geographical framework in the regional context, political stability, future-orientated political

## GAS AND LNG SCENARIO IN BANGLADESH

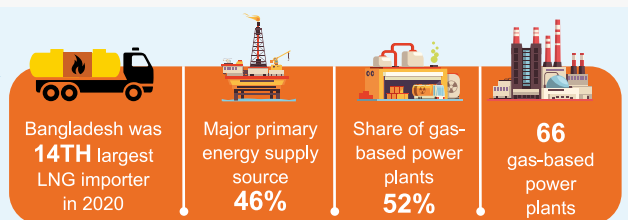
### GAS CONSUMPTION IN BANGLADESH, FY21

#### Supply and Demand

FIGURES IN BILLION CUBIC FEET (BCF)

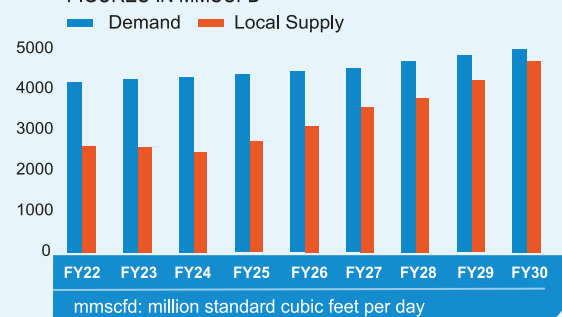


There are still shortage of supply even with existing LNG supply



### PROJECTED DEMAND-SUPPLY GAP

FIGURES IN MMSCFD



mmscfd: million standard cubic feet per day

Source: Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC)

insights, and the military powers. It is a well-established fact that, as in the past, the western IOCs may continue to significantly influence geopolitics and foreign policy in their home and host countries soon. The dynamic global energy picture will continue to determine what policy and strategic choices the exporting, transit, and importing countries make. Recent happenings have made it clear that U.S., China, Russia, and European Union (EU) foreign policy are significantly influenced by energy security. Therefore, the energy policies of the Bangladesh Government will be critical to the country's national security, political stability, international geopolitics, and economic development. With increasing economic activity and diversification of export-oriented industrialization in Bangladesh, energy demand has been burgeoning, and Bangladesh has become increasingly dependent on imported hydrocarbon.

Bangladesh's oil and gas have come entirely from the Middle East region, specifically from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman. Investments in the local gas fields will only marginalize Bangladesh's overall oil dependency on the Middle East. In the foreseeable future, Bangladesh will have to continue to rely on the Middle East's oil and gas. Although Russia offered much cheaper oil to Bangladesh to diversify its oil export market amid western sanctions, Bangladesh needs to consider this offer for two main reasons. First, the Eastern Refinery, the state-run sole refinery, can only process light crude oil imported from the Middle East countries but not the Russian crude oil, which is comparatively heavier. The refinery also has a limited annual capacity to refine crude oil, and hence possible additional imports of Russian oil could not refine there. Secondly and most importantly, if Bangladesh now purchases cheaper Russian crude oil, following the examples of China and India, the relationship with long-term suppliers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will be

jeopardized. However, for stability in the economy and to ensure energy security, Bangladesh may consider this offer delicately as Russia is offering to sell finished oil. The government is also scrutinizing the Russian offer carefully.

The presence of hundreds of thousands of unskilled Bangladeshi expatriates in the Middle East region is an additional factor that makes this region important as these expatriates' earnings significantly contribute to the country's GDP. Bangladesh, thus, needs to give much greater attention to the Middle East countries in its energy geopolitics and foreign policy priorities. Bangladesh has to be cautious regarding any geopolitical relations with the Middle East countries that may be in a position to deny them exporting energy to Bangladesh. Bangladesh needs to establish its strong economic and military relationship in the Middle East region in consultation with the concerned countries. During this turbulent time, Bangladesh needs to make a delicate and complex balance between importing oil at a high price by maintaining the long-term bilateral relationship and taking austerity measures to reduce energy consumption without hampering economic development. However, for countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, and the northeast part of India, Bangladesh is a strategic country that can play a significant role in the geopolitics of oil and gas. Given its location and access to the sea, its economic strength and potential, and its position as a burgeoning energy consumer, Bangladesh can be a part of the global geopolitics of oil and gas shortly. By attaining a position as a responsible and reliable transit country (through land and water), Bangladesh can also become a critical global player in dynamic energy geopolitics and get many economic, security, and political benefits.

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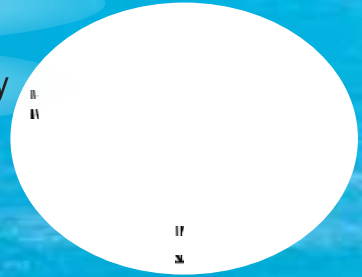
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# Bangladesh's Policy Dynamics in the context of Reshuffling Geopolitical Alliances

Nur Ahmed



Bangladesh is no longer a stranger to venturing through complex geopolitical settings. The country emerged as a sovereign state in South Asia during the height of the Cold War. Since then, the country has always found itself in the middle of geopolitical rivalries, whether it be at the regional or international level. However, the trajectory of Bangladesh has been remarkable as she succeeded in emerging as a future 'Asian Tiger' from the wrath of a war-ravaged economy. Once dubbed a 'bottomless basket,' Bangladesh is frequently referred to as a 'South Asian Miracle.' In this regard, the nation is indebted to the pragmatic vision of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who laid the foundation for the guiding postulate of our foreign policy – 'Friendship to All, Malice towards None.' It was the making or foundational period of Bangladesh's foreign policy when its priorities were securing aid and recognition as a sovereign state in the international system. It was followed by an unmaking period when the foreign

policy priorities were re-evaluated due to the changes in the political regime. Since the second decade of the 21st century, Bangladesh has pursued a dynamic foreign policy based on the guiding dictum. It can be labelled as the 'remaking' period where the country has been reshaping its policies based on the foundational directive.

Along with the emerging economic power, the geographical significance of Bangladesh has grown manifold. Bangladesh is geographically positioned as the linkage between South Asia and Southeast Asia. In maritime space, the Bay of Bengal is often labelled as its 'third neighbour,' which features a strategically important maritime route. Apart from trade and commerce, the Bay of Bengal features a huge mass of unexplored renewable energy resources, which has fueled competition under the umbrella of major infrastructural development and investment plans of the regional and global powers. Therefore, Bangladesh has innate relevance to any



regional integration and interconnectivity initiative. Although South Asia has a poor track record of regional cooperation, Bangladesh is uniquely poised to play an essential role in fostering economic connectivity. Consequently, Bangladesh's foreign policy practices have the intrinsic capacity to facilitate regional integration and allow all neighbouring regions to prosper together. Robust regional connectivity and politico-economic cooperative framework serve Bangladesh's national interests. Henceforth, economic diplomacy has been the cornerstone of Bangladesh's success in its developmental trajectory. As long as the underlying objective of a bilateral or multilateral engagement is purely an economic one, Bangladesh finds it aligned with its policy-level philosophy of 'development without enmity'.

States must formulate their foreign policies according to the changing global geopolitical dynamics. The global political landscape has undergone numerous groundbreaking changes since the inception of the time of cementing the idea of the nation-state through the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Therefore, reshuffling geopolitical alliances have been a defining feature of the international system. Forming alliances is one of the main strategies for the states to balance the relative power gap vis-à-vis other states. Due to the geopolitical significance of the Indo-Pacific region,

Bangladesh is geographically positioned to draw the attention of different politico-economic and security constellations. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSRI) are the much-discussed Chinese infrastructural connectivity initiatives. In contrast, US interests in this region are formulated under the auspices of its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS). This interest is mainly focused on security aspects of the region, and gets revised at regular intervals due to the changes in administration. Japan also shares a similar vision under its 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)' initiative. In addition, Japan launched an infrastructural connectivity initiative called 'The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B)' in 2014. There are also different economic platforms, trade blocs and banks initiated by different regional and global powers – Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), Asian Infrastructure Investment bank (AIIB), and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Apart from these traditional forms of alliances and blocs, we are also experiencing newer trends in alliance formation. The rise of minilateralism on security and economic issues has been an important aspect of contemporary geopolitical dynamics. The advent of BRICS and AUKUS and a reinvigorated QUAD are notable examples





in this regard. And we are seeing the development of several minilateral platforms like I2U2 (India, Israel, USA, UAE) and Partners in the Blue Pacific (USA, UK, Australia, Japan, New Zealand). Minilateral groupings usually consist of three to six member-states and are known for the advantage of taking a uniform decision within a very short span of time. However, in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, there will be more reshuffling in major powers' policy priorities in the region. The US has facilitated Israel's proactive role in the security domain of the Middle East. Therefore, it is expected that the Indo-pacific region will experience a renewed locus of strategic priority.

Bangladesh has so far been an exemplary case of handling complex geopolitical dynamics. However, we will continue to face difficult challenges in the coming days. In some cases, Bangladesh has been extremely cautious in handling geopolitical relations with the major powers, the practice of which is conceptually defined as 'strategic hedging.' In other cases, Bangladesh pursued proactive diplomatic activities in different sectors – humanitarian diplomacy, climate diplomacy, vaccine diplomacy, peace diplomacy etc. Overall, Bangladesh prioritises multilateralism, development imperatives and securing investments for infrastructural and energy sectors. These priorities might be hampered by maintaining neutrality for an extended period in the context of a global crisis. In this case, Bangladesh should focus on mending the domestic anomalies in the economic sector and adopting a stable foreign policy with some degree of flexibility. In addition to these, Bangladesh is also facing some specific ones:

> The Rohingya crisis has now become a prolonged crisis that urgently needs to be resolved. Bangladesh is facing problems

at the domestic, regional and international levels in this regard. At the domestic level, the crisis has turned into a credible risk for national stability and security due to emerging trends of crimes in the refugee camps. Despite friendly bilateral relations with its regional partners, Bangladesh is still pursuing the required regional support to resolve the crisis. At the international level, the major powers are still delinquent in playing their parts in resolving the crisis. The US has recently recognised the atrocities of Myanmar authorities as genocidal activities committed against the Rohingya community. However, the global community has more to do to ensure the safe repatriation of the Rohingya people to their home country.

> Bangladesh needs to diversify the labour markets for its migrant workers. Remittances sent by them have been one of the central pillars of the national economy. Due to global crises, the labour market variables might change anytime, and Bangladesh needs to be prepared for that. And the competent authority should focus more on supplying more skilled human resources and promoting safe migration.

> The world is experiencing a series of crises such as the global pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict etc. The usual course of global trade and economy is being affected, and consequently, the price of essentials has gone up, and the world is on the verge of severe food and energy crisis. Amidst these global crises, maintaining sustained economic growth will be a major challenge for Bangladesh in the coming days. It will be a test case for Bangladesh to maintain its success in reducing poverty, inequality and inflation rates in the changing global context.

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# Impact of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict and its Repercussions on South Asian Geo-economics

Anannay Zaman

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In a highly globalized world, even limited conflict anywhere tends to generate ripple effects that have adverse global ramifications. History is testimony to our capacity for engaging in violence in the name of national interest. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is an ongoing example of how such a conflict generates a deleterious geo-economic ripple effect and affects different economies, near and far, and human well-being everywhere.

The Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2020, in combination with other variables such as the middle-income trap, had a very negative impact on previously robust economies, including the South Asian economies that were prone to supply chain disruptions, rising inflation, falling external demand, and growing poverty rates because of being net importers of commodities. At the advent of this conflict, the world economy

was at a crucial point, where the recovery phase from the COVID-19 epidemic had just started. In fact, before this conflict, supply chain disruptions and rising gasoline costs already made it difficult to control worldwide inflation and growth. Russia and Ukraine account for a large portion of the world's supplies of oil, gas, and other commodities, so this tension has driven up commodity prices even more. In addition, global financial markets are more volatile now than ever because of uncertainty over when and how much major central banks will tighten their monetary policies.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has negatively impacted economies trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic-related economic downside in South Asia and worldwide. Countries, irrespective of size or economic strength, are struggling

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desperately in the throes of rising inflation. Coming as it did in the wake of a debilitating pandemic that had already vastly disrupted global value and supply chains, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives globally, and pushed millions back into poverty; The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has had the effect of kicking a weakened global socio-economic system that is kneeling in many places. Ukraine is one of the largest exporters of wheat, corn, and sunflower oil/seeds, while Russia too has sizeable grain markets abroad. Russia is a major supplier of oil and gas to many countries, notably the EU, India and even the USA. The conflict and resultant disruption to production and shipment have resulted in a globally cascading disruption of energy and food supplies and an unfolding global supply crisis for which the poorest will pay the heaviest price. Lest we forget, this conflict and the tension around the Black Sea has resulted in shipping costs shooting up and spreading

scenario. The conflict, for instance, is still ongoing, and no one can say with any certainty when it will end. Proxy wars by super/great powers do not quite quickly end, or they may morph into different (uncertain) alternative forms that are equally unpredictable – unless the main antagonists themselves decide to bury the hatchet. However, this seems unlikely as of now in respect of the current conflict. For the time being, prudence and pragmatism dictate that we err on the bleaker assumption likely to prevail. The Covid-variants pandemic, in the meantime, continues to rage unbounded, and another deadly viral danger has reared its head menacingly with an offside chance of becoming a pandemic if not watchfully addressed. All these, whether singly or in unison, would render the current fragility more brittle and worsen the current global trade situation by causing yet additional disruptions to the teetering (although recently restored value and supply



into increasing costs of commodities and rising prices for all consumers. Disrupting the global energy and food grains value and supply chains has changed the dynamic of world politics and economics in many ways, including but not limited to the aspect of geo-economics.

The South Asian region, more than ever, needs to focus on macroeconomic stabilization, structural reforms, and regional monetary and financial cooperation. Many countries had already started their recovery from the pandemic, and many were en route with their policy recalibration in process or being implemented.

It is challenging to examine the economic ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict for South Asia, especially in a changing

chains), triggering yet more shock waves to global trade channels, more unstable international financial markets and decreased worldwide demand, all of which can directly or indirectly adversely impact South Asia.

South Asia is directly impacted by trade connections, primarily through rising commodity prices because the area is a net importer of several of them. As a result, inflation in South Asian economies increased dramatically compared to their worldwide counterparts even before this conflict. The difference has become even wider due to the extra shock to commodity prices, which has also increased the relative cost of production in the area and reduced the competitiveness of energy and labor intensive sectors. Inflation in South Asian

economies was growing in comparison to rivals in the international markets even before this conflict. However, the disparity will become much more expansive due to the extra shock to commodity prices, which will raise the region's relative cost of production and reduce the competitiveness of energy- and labor-intensive businesses.

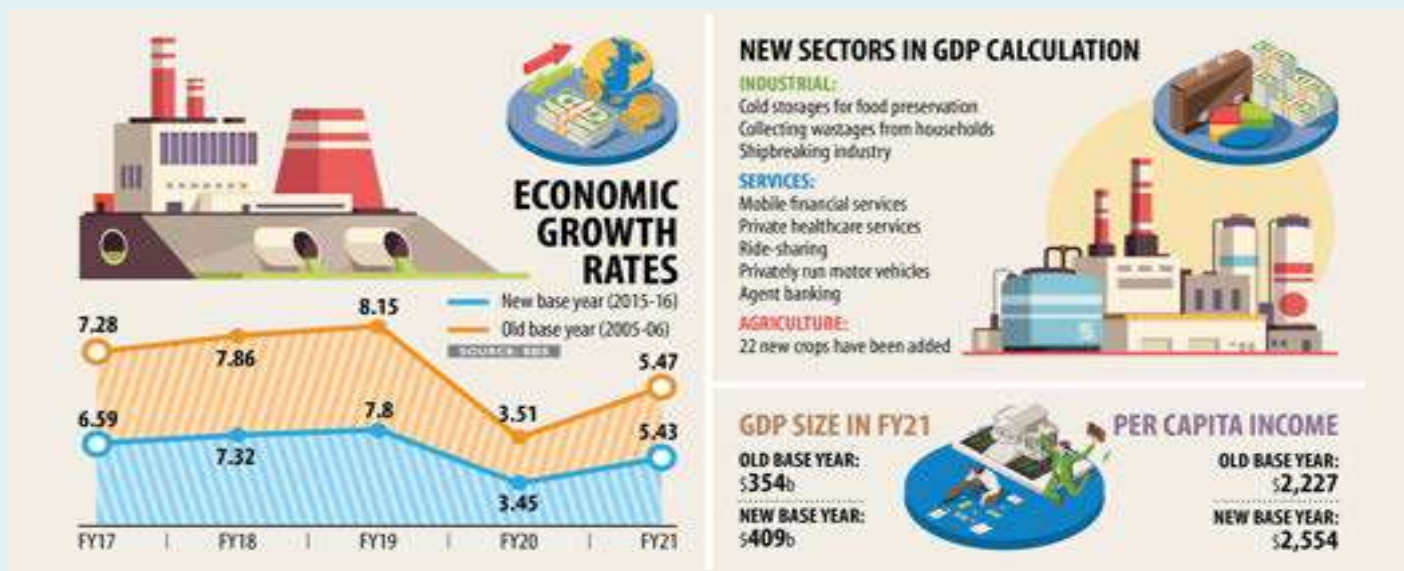
South Asia has a considerably larger dependence on fossil fuels for energy production than other parts of Asia. Two factors would cause the indirect effect to spread: first, a decline in global demand would impair the demand for products and services produced locally abroad; second, increasing market volatility and uncertainty would cause capital to flee to safer havens. Moreover, Russia and Ukraine account for a sizable portion of the world's supplies of oil, gas, and other commodities like wheat and sunflower oil. Consequently, this conflict has had a negative influence on their supply networks across the world. India's imports of oil from Russian-origin crude accounted for 10 percent of India's total seaborne imports in April for the first time, rising from 0.2 percent throughout 2021 and Q1 2022. Bangladesh Bank stated that in the 2020-21 fiscal year, goods worth 800 million dollars (80 crore dollars) were imported from Ukraine and Russia that largely contain wheat. As a result, another immediate effect is a rise in inflation reading. At the same time, this conflict will indirectly negatively influence economic growth and cause stagflation in the area. Finally, the length of the conflict, the impact of Western sanctions on Russia, and the Russian response will all affect how hard South Asian nations will be hurt.

The relationship between Russia and India has been solid since the cold war era, while the US was on good terms with Pakistan. The economic scenario flipped in present times, where India trades more with the US than its old allies. However, India's armed forces, one of the largest in South and Southeast Asia, are heavily reliant on Russian military equipment and spare parts supplies. Bangladesh and Russia's relations also have a historic foundation. Lest we forget, but for two critically important

Russian vetoes in the UN Security Council, Pakistani forces might have reconsolidated when they were in a weakened position, by the US navy being in holding position in the Bay of Bengal in 1971 ready to weigh in to force a cease-fire. Additionally, most of Bangladesh's early defense equipment was of Soviet/Russian origin. Currently, Bangladesh is hoping to address the Energy Crisis when the Rooppour Power Plants, purchased from Russia, finally come on stream. Bangladesh has stood fast by its fundamental foreign policy tenet enunciated by our Founding Father Bangabandhu, of "Friendship to all and malice towards none." We have abjured being judgmental and pointing the accusatory or condemnatory finger at either combatant party with both of whom as well as their respective allies, we have friendship and cooperation. But at the same time, we have weighed in publicly against violations of human rights and principles of peace, justice, and equity to which we are unequivocally committed.

The South Asian economies should start extensive structural changes as soon as signs of economic stabilization appear to free up the private sector and markets and move toward low-carbon green growth. The South Asian economies could also create an expert committee under the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation or the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to investigate measures to improve regional monetary and financial cooperation. All of this means the nations need to start adjusting their policy frameworks urgently to be on proper adjustment to the constantly changing scene. The governments of South Asian countries, especially those that are net oil importers, should search for alternative oil suppliers to ensure their energy needs to deal with the current situation brought on by disruptions in the oil supply due to the Russia-Ukraine issue.

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# Geopolitical Conflicts



**Territorial Dispute**  
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict  
Conflict Status: Unchanging

**Civil War**  
Conflict in Syria  
Conflict Status: Unchanging

**Sectarian**  
Conflict with Boko Haram in Nigeria  
Conflict Status: Unchanging

**Civil War**  
Civil War in South Sudan  
Conflict Status: Unchanging

# Around the Globe



**Territorial Dispute**  
Conflict in Ukraine  
Conflict Status: Worsening



**Civil War**  
War in Afghanistan  
Conflict Status: Worsening



**Territorial Disputes**  
Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea  
Conflict Status: Unchanging



**Sectarian**  
Instability in Myanmar  
Conflict Status: Worsening



**Transnational Terrorism**  
Conflict with Al-Shabab in Somalia  
Conflict Status: Unchanging



**Civil War**  
War in Yemen  
Conflict Status: Worsening



**Territorial Dispute**  
Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict  
Conflict Status: Unchanging

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# International Climate Change Negotiations: Strategic Priorities for Bangladesh

Afifat Khanam Ritika



Globally, the debate and discussion about climate change are conducted along two tracks. One is science-based named “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)”, and the other is a policy track controlled by the “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)”.

The treaty (UNFCCC) provides different responsibilities for the three types of signatory states. These categories are advanced countries with special financial responsibilities and backward or developing countries. Advanced countries are also known as developed countries or Annex 1 countries. Advanced countries must adopt national schemes and take appropriate measures to mitigate climate change by limiting anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and report on measures adopted, individually or collectively, to restore the 1990 emission levels. The advanced countries with special financial responsibility are also called Annex II countries. Annex II include all Annex I countries except those transitioning to democracy and a market economy. Annex II

countries will be asked to provide new and additional funding to cover the costs to the developing countries for meeting their obligation to establish national inventories of their emissions by source. This will also include removals by sinks for all greenhouse gases that the Montreal Protocol does not cover. Although Bangladesh is a developing country, the Bangladesh government pioneered the establishment of a climate change trust fund over 10 years ago. It has funded hundreds of adaptation projects across the country by ministries, agencies and civil society organizations. Now the fund has evolved to include climate change in the national budget. In the national budget for 2021-2022, 8% is earmarked for combating climate change in 25 ministries and also through NGOs. Alongside this, the country is also trying to access global funds. Bangladesh is a sufferer rather than a producer and trying to keep the temperature change to 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius. Bangladesh causes only 0.3% of the total global emissions. Even if it lowered to 0.0%, nothing would happen to the world.



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As Bangladesh aims to exit Least Developed Country (LDC) status in the next few years and engages more closely in various international activities and issues, we must tackle climate change as a national and diplomatic priority.

Bangladesh recently completed its term as the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) group of finance ministers from the 48 countries that comprise the international body for climate-vulnerable nations. Bangladesh's Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and V20 presidency advocated for strengthening climate action for survival and resilience. Indeed, the CVF is an international partnership of countries at high risk from this warming planet. The forum acts as a South-South cooperation party line for participating governments to take joint action against global climate change. In contrast, the V20 Group of Finance Ministers of the Climate Vulnerable Forum is a committed collaborative initiative of economies that are legally exposed to climate change. The V20 works through dialogue and action to combat global climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report clearly states that everyone must take urgent and decisive action to save the planet and future generations. The most recent IPCC Working Group II report features huge holes between transformation moves made and what is really required in numerous locales, and taking into account the extent of environmental change influences, activities on carrying out variation are deficient. In this specific situation, and in addition to a lack of funding, political commitment, reliable information, and a sense of urgency, the most vulnerable people and ecosystems are at the maximum risk. The CVF's 48 members account for just 5% of the total global emissions and are often referred to as the 'ground zero' of the adverse impacts of climate change. However, according to vulnerability, the Global Climate Risk Index ranked Bangladesh seventh among the most climate vulnerable countries in 2021 annual report. So tricking out proper strategies in the global platform should be developed pragmatically by Bangladesh.

No country can negotiate alone in the UNFCCC. So they need to form negotiating groups. Bangladesh can negotiate as a Least Developing Countries (LDC) group member. Bangladesh has many experienced negotiators selected by the LDC group due to their expertise on different topics to represent the LDCs on relevant topics. So, LDC is one of the country's best platforms to convey the global territory's needs. Federal countries have a long history of being involved in and contributing to the challenges of climate change. More than one-third of the CVF member states are also members of the Commonwealth of Nations, which lighten a new hope for global attention. The joint efforts of the CVF and Commonwealth member states can act as synergists for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Bangladesh has also been selected as a member of many vital institutions established by the UNFCCC over the years, including the Adaptation Fund Committee, the Green Climate Fund Committee,

and the Warsaw International Loss and Damage Mechanism Executive Committee. This is the further recognition of Bangladesh's expertise and importance in this area by other states. Such international recognition may put Bangladesh in the global scenario regarding the issues related to the fight against climate change, especially in implementing activities. Therefore, Bangladesh is undoubtedly recognized as an essential country in UNFCCC consultations for domestic action, negotiators, and other representatives of the COP.



Working together to find practical, comprehensive and locally-led solutions to combat climate change is an apparent strategic option considering the country's present condition. To achieve the goal and serious consequences successfully, Bangladesh could approach our sub-groups like LDC, which can propose in G77 and finally, G77 can urge in the global platform. The Group of 77 (G77) is the United Nations' biggest intergovernmental group of 134 emerging countries which is aimed at enhancing collective economic ability and developing joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations. We need to enhance knowledge sharing, research, capacity building and the transfer of affordable, clean and environmentally friendly technologies to developing countries to achieve sustainable, environmentally friendly, nature-based solutions for a prosperous future. Our joint position could help to secure \$ 100 billion annually in climate funding promised in the Paris Agreement from developed to developing countries. Climate funding must be added to existing and future Official Development Assistance (ODA). Standing mutually is essential for the amount allocation in adaptation and mitigation evenly. The problems of ancestral homes and traditionally displaced climate migrants due to the negative impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels, salinity, river erosion, floods, and droughts, need to be addressed. There must be a global responsibility for the reintegration of these people. Finally, the collective action led by Bangladesh can act as a force for significant emitters to declare ambitious and aggressive NDCs to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

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# Shipping 5.0: Customization of Experience through Digital Transformation

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Over the past three decades, the global economic landscape has experienced a substantial transformation process, which has led to the spread of service economies and the corresponding decline of traditional industry-based businesses. Shipping, like most industries, is undergoing a digital transformation process which influences existing business models and operational practices in multifaceted ways. Today, the module of the shipping business has been changing to incorporate various social demands, environment, innovation and sustainability priorities into fundamental shipping strategies while taking advantage of technological advancements. In the era of the state-of-art industrial revolution, which constituted the evolution of advanced communications and information technologies and promoted sustainable, human-centric, and resilient business development strategies, shipping industries need to embrace a broader perspective and a deeper understanding of it. In addition, the uptake of digital processes, automation and other efficient driving technologies will increase in the coming years because of the impact of COVID-19 on ports and terminals. Moreover, the current geopolitical situation, such as the conflict in Ukraine, is pushing the shipping industry toward Shipping 5.0, where skilled and experienced people will work alongside

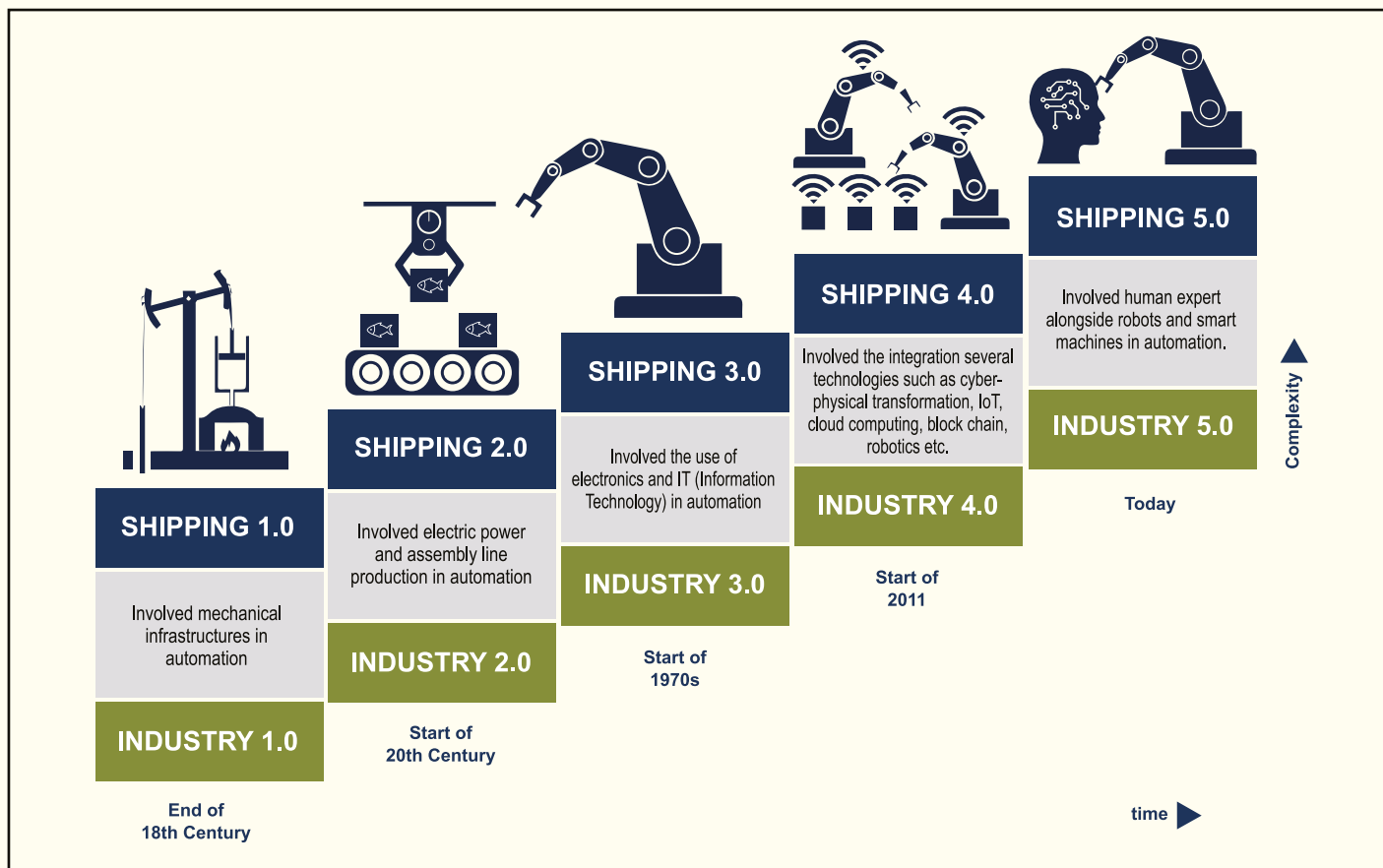
robots and smart machines. This will reduce the human casualty and also increase shipping efficiency.

Shipping 5.0 uses all the components of the Industry 4.0 framework. It embraces automation and innovative technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain and Skilled Personnel to improve its performance. In the last decade, most modern industries tried to revolutionise themselves through Industry 4.0 by using technologies, e.g. machine-to-machine communication, cognitive computing, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), IoT, robotics, cloud computing, mobile technologies, computing, data storage and connectivity. Subsequently, production efficiency improved by leaps and bounds, resulting in a spurt in the growth of the world economy. The global shipping industry, which is the lifeline of the global economy, moves about 90% of world trade by volume and, in the process, generates an estimated annual income of over half trillion USD in freight rates needed to replicate this technology-driven growth. Hence, Industry 4.0 was also embraced by the shipping industry to improve its value chain and management to enhance profits and reduce overheads by improving efficiency. This technological transformation in the shipping industry was termed Shipping

4.0. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was felt that robots and intelligent machines should work alongside skilled human resources in the shipping sector, leading to the Shipping 5.0 revelation. Several research studies found that robots guided by humans work better and faster by leveraging advanced technologies like the IoT and AI. It also increases the efficiency of automation.

automating port operations, i.e. vessel management, container terminal operations, and yard automation.

Although digitising in the shipping industry is still in an embryonic phase, it has already become hugely popular. This popularity has led to exponential data creation, supported efficiently by hardware (computing power) and 'Cloud'-based data-storage solutions (on-site storage). Another area where



Today, the shipping industries use digitalisation for connectivity - to get real-time information about a ship's performance at sea; for maintenance - to enable remote diagnostics of the machinery of ships at sea; and for safety - to ensure the shore-based monitoring of gas emissions and cargo temperatures of its seagoing assets, to decrease the operational cost and risk of failure due to negligence. Most seaports also use digitalisation to facilitate their activities. A smart port is realised by utilising wireless devices, smart sensors, actuators, data centres, and other IoT-based systems connected and exchanging information. The seamless communication of ships, cargoes, and waterway and shore-based facilities, based on 5G and IoT technologies, constitutes the infrastructure of the smart port and shapes the innovation potential of the emergent maritime logistics services and applications. The efficiency, security, and safety of port operations and the achievement of the highly prioritised sustainable development goals are substantially improved by

digitalisation is being implemented in the shipping industry is cargo shipment using blockchain technology. A 'blockchain' is basically a way to store, share, and verify information using a 'ledger'. The stored information in the blockchain exists as a shared, secured, decentralised, and encrypted 'public ledger', which inherently resists any modification and is easily verifiable. This, therefore, enhances cybersecurity, resulting in the blockchain process becoming a platform of trust and value in industries that have adopted this technology. Introducing blockchain technology in the shipping industry can cut administrative and operational risks for ship owners, charters and brokers, as it ensures greater transparency, enhances security, improves traceability, increases efficiency and speed of transactions, and reduces costs.

Shipping 5.0 has been implemented in many countries like the USA, Germany, France, UK, China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand. Particularly in the supply chain area, digitalisation and integration

of AI and IoT, sharing economy, and blockchain are important in addition to other core technologies. Logistics has not been associated with high technology for a long time since it was recognised as an industry in the mid of the nineteenth century. The situation is changing with the increase of Logistics 5.0 efforts. This logistic transformation is directly related to shipping sectors, presenting a more efficient, sustainable, error-free and secure approach.

Despite of the enormous advantages of adopting Shipping 5.0, the shipping industries may face the following barriers in the next few years:

> **Cost:** Initially, the development and set up of Shipping 5.0 technology is expensive. Maintenance is also costly, as companies need to rely heavily on experts to iron out teething problems in the beginning.

> **Lack of standardisation:** One of the common obstacles in shipping is the fragmented market, making the business case difficult for anyone who wants to justify an investment, which is also reflected in the lack of standardised data and, consequently, incompatibility of data. A major barrier lies in the sector's inability to have information in time, i.e., to analyse and make use of data in real time, thus, obtaining information that will support better decision-making.

> **Migrating from legacy systems:** Migrating over from older systems is expensive and time-consuming. Staff working on simpler systems must first undergo rigorous training on how to use cutting-edge technology before business as usual can commence.

> **High energy use:** All these new technologies need uninterrupted energy sources to function in real-time. When a new node is created, it communicates to all other nodes in the Cyber Network. It draws large quantities of computational power. It is also expensive and drains precious resources. Like most industries, the shipping sector aims

to reduce its carbon footprint, not increase it.

Bangladesh's economy is growing comparatively faster than other regional countries. The present government, assuming office in 2009, concurrently envisioned and undertook massive investment in development projects, helping GDP growth multiplication. As a maritime nation, Bangladesh's booming economic growth mainly depends on the sea and its shipping sectors. More than two-thirds of Bangladesh's trade by volume is transported by ships of different sorts and sizes. The shipping industry's contribution to the country's economic sustainability is enormous and will even be more in the future. Bangladesh's global trade value for exports and imports was \$74.47 billion in 2014, which grew by \$116.23 billion by 2021. The trade growth is 2.68% compared to the global growth of 6.61%. The growth trend of the shipping industry was promising even during the COVID pandemic. The seagoing vessel number increased from 48 to 80 by June 2022. Chittagong Port currently handled 119 million tons of import and export cargo, including 3.21 million TEUs of container in 2021-22 FY. The annual growth rate of container traffic has been increased about 10-12% over the last 5 years. Realising the potential of Bangladesh's ocean shipping sector, its digital transformation is necessary for achieving sustainable development goals. Bangladesh Government has also set up a goal to bring 5G to all metropolitan cities by 2026, which will undoubtedly boost the technological transformation. Although Bangladesh has not yet grown technologically as a modern country, and we have budget constraints, still the county is moving progressively towards a vision of becoming a digital Bangladesh. The government is taking megaprojects for sustainable development through diverse digital transformations. Thus, the adaptation of Shipping 5.0 by all major actors in the Bangladeshi shipping industry, especially seaports, can help the country to be globally competitive and meet its demands.

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# Multimodal Approach in Mariculture: Sustainable Use of Blue Economy to Boost Up Economic Growth of Bangladesh

Asst. Prof. Md. Masud Rana



Blue economy is an emerging concept in economic development in the world, and Bangladesh is no exception. The blue economy of Bangladesh is realized through multiple interrelated activities, among which mariculture, seafood production, ocean exploration, shipping and trade, tourism and recreation, ecosystem biodiversity, coastal resilience, new technologies, and climate change challenges are the most promising sectors. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations declared in a report titled 'The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)-2022' that Bangladesh is the second-largest producer of freshwater finfish in the world. Bangladesh is ranked 1st in the world in Hilsa fish production. In sea fish extraction Bangladesh's position is 26th. Bangladesh's maritime borders have abundant resources to enhance the existing economy with great potential to improve livelihoods as well as significantly

reduce environmental risks and ecological deficits. The peaceful resolution of maritime disputes has opened the door to an immense potential for exploration and exploitation of vast, valuable resources in Bangladesh's coastal and its marine waters, whose sustainable management can contribute significantly to improving our existing economic situation.

Mariculture is one of the major technologies that alone can play a vital role in the national economy. Mariculture is a specialized branch of aquaculture that involves the cultivation of marine organisms for food and other animal products. In other words, mariculture is the cultivation of plants and animals in the salt water of the sea. The main classes of mariculture species are seaweeds, shrimps, snails, crustaceans, and finfish. Efforts are already underway to bring caged fish and seaweed to the farming stage. The Bay of Bengal

is a vast natural resource reservoir of Bangladesh that extends from 710 km of the coast from South East Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district to Shyamnagar and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 nautical miles from the baseline. Due to the settlement of maritime boundary disputes with Myanmar in 2012 and India in 2014, a total of 1 lakh 18 thousand 813 square km was settled by the International Court of Justice. Bangladesh gained more area than before. In addition, Bangladesh's sovereign rights are established over the exclusive economic resource zone of 200 nautical miles and all kinds of fauna and other resources under the continental shelf from the Chittagong coast to 345 nautical miles. So far, 475 species of fish, 36 species of shrimp, 5 species of octopus, 20 species of crabs, 5 species of turtles, 120 species of corals, and 138 species of seaweeds have been found in the Bay of Bengal.

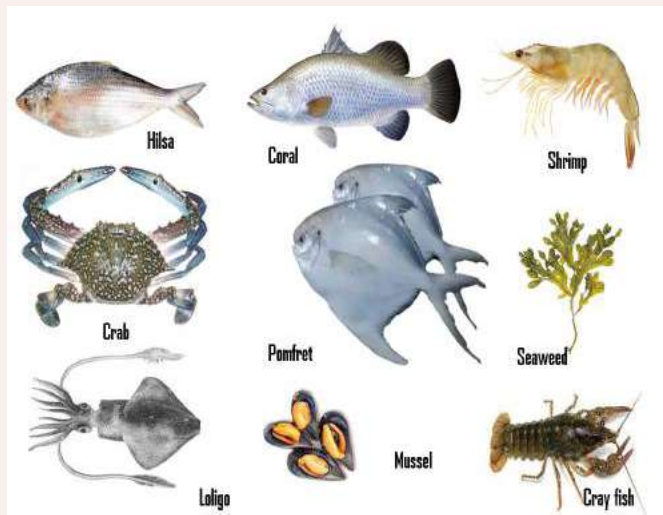


Fig. Some Commercially Important Sea Assets

Scientific farming of fish, shrimps, crabs, and other shellfish in sea cages can be an important way to increase the marine resources of Bangladesh. Farming in marine cages can lead to various problems such as lost cages, management complications, pollution problems, natural disasters, etc. Smart technology can be used to solve all problems.

Otherwise, the resources extracted from the sea will not add to the country's economy as much as we are expecting. Apart from fish resources, the Bay of Bengal is full of marine animals, weeds and vines. It is possible to earn a lot of foreign exchange by exporting marine food products to meet the country's needs. About 20 types of commercial fish are extracted from the seas of Bangladesh, such as mackerel, rupchanda and black mackerel, tuna, mackerel, loyta, chapa, sea rita, shapla pata fish, tailla, poa, surma, hilsa, knife, faisya, sea bine and kai. Apart from fish, sea prawns especially bagda prawns are in great demand. Some species of seaweed in Bangladesh are rich in protein which can be used as a substitute for imported fish oil as fish feed. Some species can also be used to increase the quality of animal feed. Among the three types of seaweed, green is commonly eaten as a snack or salad, red is used to

produce hydrocolloids, and brown seaweed is used for both food and hydrocolloid production. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 8.44 million tons of seafood are harvested worldwide every year. Marine fish, plants and animals contribute a lot to the world's protein consumption. Already there is a demand for sea fish and shrimp in Bangladesh. In addition, it is possible to extract and produce crabs, oysters, snails, seaweed, octopus, cattle fish, lobster, lobster, mussels, and sea cucumbers from the sea.

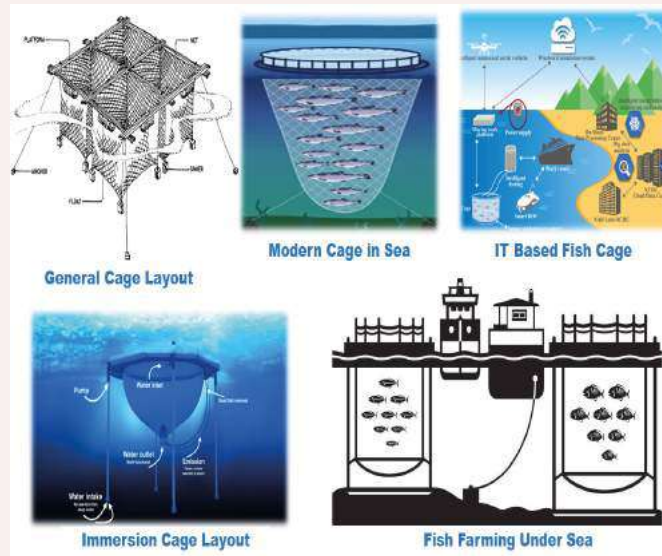


Fig. Feasible Mariculture Techniques for Fish and Shellfish

About 85% of the fish caught in the country comes from inland sources and about 15% from marine resources. In the fiscal year 2020-2021, 6.81 lakh metric tonnes of fish have been extracted from marine water resources. The second export income sector is almost entirely supplied by fishery resources from the coastal areas and marine sources of Bangladesh. But we have some challenges to the perspective of the blue economy, such as frequent floods, marine pollution, including ocean acidification and blue carbon, lack of trained personnel, harmonizing sectoral policies, plans, and laws, poor ocean governance, and political support, etc.

As the mariculture of Bangladesh is prosperous, the production of fish resources in the country can increase, and the demand for animal-originated protein be met. Not only that, by creating employment, the problem of unemployment will be eliminated; thus, food security and sustainable development will be ensured. Earning foreign exchange through the export of marine resources will play an important role in the socio-economic development of the country. Science-based extraction and economic development will significantly enrich our national economy. After all, it will play a unique role in the country's socio-economic development.

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# Payra Sea Port: Emerging as a 3rd Economic Corridor of Bangladesh

Cdr Md Mahmudul Hasan Khan, (H2), psc, BN



## Background

Bangladesh has one of the world's fastest growing economies. The country's seaborne trade and shipping are growing rapidly. The current ports, Chittagong and Mongla, do not sustain the trade volumes needed for economic growth. Current ports are congested, while the trade volume is expected to triple by 2030. The unprecedented economic growth and development, coupled with the expansion of seaborne trade, have given birth to the country's third economic corridor- Payra Sea Port. In order to establish a new north-south economic corridor and transform the socio-economic scenario of the entire southern-central part of Bangladesh, the Payra Port Authority (PPA) Act 2013 was passed in the National Parliament on 10 November 2013. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Port on 19 November 2013. The Port started its journey as one of the ten fast-track projects of Bangladesh. It is now an operational

port ushering immense potential for the country's economy, augmenting trade and commerce.

## Current Operational Status of Payra Port

The Port's operational activities commenced on 13 August 2016 on a limited scale, and since September 2019, the coal-carrying cargo vessels have been coming regularly. Mentionable that Payra's 1320 MW Thermal Power Plant's current annual coal requirement is 3.98 million metric tons which PPA handles. As of June 2022, more than 206 merchant ships entered Payra Port and thereby could collect taka revenue, approximately 430 crores. Presently, the maximum permissible draught of the vessel ranges from 7.2 m to 8 m (depending on tidal height), and the maximum permissible length overall (LOA) of a vessel is 200 meters. However, on completion of ongoing capital dredging, the channel will be



10.5 metres deep and the vessel's allowable draught will be over 12 metres.

## Major Development Projects and Ongoing Activities

**Capital and Maintenance Dredging:** Since January 2020, the Payra Port has maintained a minimum channel depth of 6.3 m from chart datum (CD) by dredging to allow coal-carrying cargo vessels to enter the Port. At present, the Port is conducting capital and maintenance dredging, which will be implemented in 34 months (01 May 2021 to 30 April 2024) in 3 phases, namely Separable Portion (SP) 1: Siltation Studies; SP2: Actual Dredging and SP3: Maintenance of the dredged channel. In SP1 (14 months), the actual amount of siltation in various depths has been determined. In SP2 (14 months), the main capital dredging work of the Inner and Outer Channel is due to start on 01 August 2022 and will be completed by October 2023. In SP3 (6 months), the dredged channel will be maintained for the next 06 months. As a result, a 75 km long, 100-125 meters wide, up to 10.5-meter deep channel will be able to handle vessels with a capacity of 3,000 TEUs or 40,000 DWT of cargo once the capital dredging is completed in October 2023.

**Payra Port's First Terminal and Related Facilities Development Projects:** Payra Port is developing 1st multipurpose terminal consisting of 650X60 meters long jetty for 3 berths, 650x500 meters yard and 6 lane access road (6.5 km) to ensure modern terminal services. As a result, 3 vessels of 200 meters can be berthed at a time without congestion and interruptions. Moreover, Payra Port have 1 service jetty of 100 meters, 1 CFS (Container Freight Station) of 10,000 square meter, 1 backup yard of 3,25,000 square meter and 1 service jetty of 100 m and related support facilities. The first terminal and related facilities will be fully operational by June 2023.

**Planned Marine Terminals and Port Facilities:** Payra Port Authority has designed a master plan in collaboration with BUET and Royal HaskoningDHV, a Netherlands-based consulting firm, to develop a modern port and port allied services. The Port aims to provide more than 11 km quayside along the west bank of the Rabnabad Channel, and an area of 6000 acres is included in the port development plan. The most

important plans are - multipurpose terminals, container terminals, coal terminals, liquid bulk terminals, LNG terminals, trans-shipment terminals, shipyard and ship repair facilities, Payra Port Industrial Zone etc. Some of these development efforts are underway, and the investors will develop some. According to the study of Royal HaskoningDHV, PPA will be able to handle 89.8 million tons and 5.1 million TEUs of cargo by 2035. Thus, the Payra Port will be fully operational by 2023 and a thriving economic hub as a modern port by 2035.

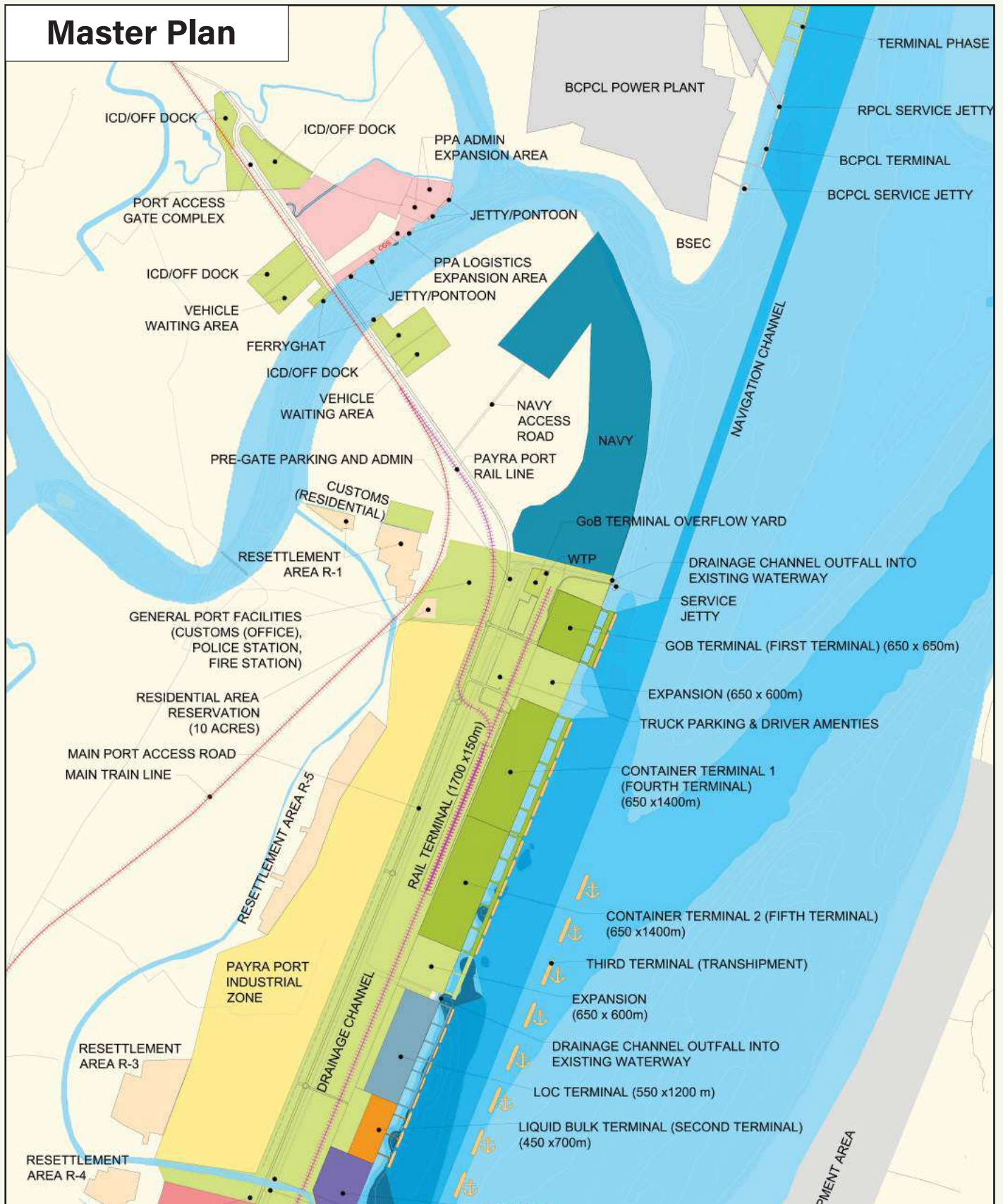
**Multimodal Connectivity of Payra Sea Port:** The Port will connect the country's main urban areas via an important corridor connecting Dhaka to the southern tip of the Delta, crossing the new Padma Bridge. The Government is investing in developing road, rail and inland waterway transportations between Payra Sea Port and Kuakata to Dhaka, making Payra Sea Port a truly multimodal transport hub. Payra Port is well connected to the maximum districts of South Bengal, including the Khulna area, by river route that creates an opportunity for trans-shipment operations which is cost-effective and commercially viable. Mentionable that, the natural depth at the Kajal-Tetulia river route is from 4.2 meters to 17.5 meters. Payra Port is connected with the Meghna river through the Kajal-Tatulia river. The 72 nautical miles long Kajal-Tetulia river route connects the high seas through the Rabnabad Channel. This river route is presently suitable for plying with 5.0 m meter draught from PPA Inner Anchorage to Dhaka and other destinations.

## Expected Outlook of Payra Port in 2023 Onward

- > Maximum up to 12-meter draft vessels will be able to come alongside the port jetty with the help of the tide.
- > Container ships of 3000 TEUs and bulk cargoes of 40,000 tons can come directly to the port jetty.
- > Inland waterway coasters will be able to carry goods from PPA Inner Anchorage to Dhaka and other destinations.
- > PPA will be able to handle 89.8 million tons and 5.1 million TEUs of cargo by 2035, according to the study of the PPA master plan consultant firm. Mentionable that Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) handled 3.1 million TEUs



# Master Plan



of cargo in 2021. The container cargo throughput of Bangladesh will substantially increase to 10.1 to 12.6 million TEUs in 2041, according to the study of the Matarbari Port consultant team.

> Annually, 20 million metric tons of coal can be handled directly from the port jetty, which will fulfil the demand for power generation in the country's south-central region at a lower transportation cost. Presently CPA, MPA and PPA handle 1.4 million metric tons, 0.11 million metric tons and 3.98 million metric tons of coal, respectively.

> Investors will be interested in constructing other components such as containers, bulk, LNG terminal, shipbuilding and repair facility, including industries, port supportive industrial zone, etc.

emerge as a vibrant world-class seaport and a thriving economic hub as a modern port by 2035. Once completed, Payra Port will substantially stimulate the national economy, contributing 1% growth in GDP. Its development activities are advancing at a rapid pace. This will usher in foreign investments, creating a third economic corridor in the country's southern region. It is an opportune moment for the investors to invest in the capacity building of the Port. With the untapped potential of the Port, together with the high GDP growth rate and investor-friendly environment of Bangladesh, the investors are sure to yield a high and long-term return on investment and contribute significantly to the country's journey towards being a developed nation by 2041.

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## Conclusion

Payra Port will be fully operational by 2023. It is designed to

## SMART IDEAS FOR SUSTAINABLE PORT MANAGEMENT



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## Blue Economy a New Potential Investment Sector: Bida



The blue economy is the new potential sector of investment in Bangladesh, and it is possible to earn billions of dollars from this sector in the next few years. Just we need suitable policies in place, said Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida) Executive Chairman Md Sirazul Islam.

Addressing a seminar on "Blue Economy: Prospective Economic Engagement in Bangladesh" at Bida conference room in the capital city on Monday, he requested the concerned departments of the government to reform the existing policies promptly and create simple investment-friendly policies.

Presenting the keynote, the Secretary (Maritime Affairs Unit) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rear Admiral (Retd) Md Khurshed Alam talked about the overall maritime boundary of Bangladesh that expands up to 664 kilometers (354 nautical miles). He stated that at present, fish is harvested within only

60km. Despite claiming the boundaries in 2012, marine resources, including oil and gas, are still out of our reach.

He explained that not only fish or mineral resources but the entire economy of Bangladesh could be changed by using the sea within its borders. Various industries, including tourism, shipbuilding, deep-sea fishing vessels, containers, medicine, and cosmetics, can be developed using marine resources.

At the seminar, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Md Saiful Islam requested the government policymakers to take the advice of private sector experts in making policies.

Officials of the Maritime Affairs Unit, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, and Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism participated in the seminar.

## Cox's Bazar to Generate 60 MW from Wind Energy by December

Bangladesh's power generation from large and medium-scale wind-run power plants will increase by December next year. Construction works on some of the large projects initiated in the last couple of years are expected to end within the deadline.

While the government plans to implement a dozen wind power projects to generate around 350 MW in the next few years, Cox's

Bazar will likely see the country's largest plant producing 60 MW electricity by December this year.

The country now produces over 890 MW from renewable sources – a meager 2.9 MW from wind energy and the rest from solar parks and the country's lone hydropower plant at Kaptai in Rangamati, or 3.5% of the total capacity of over 25,500 MW,



according to Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (Sreda).

The daily production ranges from 12,000-14,000 MW due to the ongoing fuel crisis and maintenance issues. As of July 23, only 186 MW was added to the national grid from solar plants and 127 MW from the Kaptai plant, according to Bangladesh Power

Development Board (BPDB) website. However, as per the Load Dispatch Centre's daily report, solar energy's contribution was 231 MW at the evening peak.

Earlier, the government had set a target of generating 1,152 MW by 2021 from wind energy and 40% of total electricity from renewable sources by 2040.

## Specific Strategic Plan Needed to Tap the Possibilities of the Blue Economy: Experts

A Zoom discussion organized by the Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) was held on 20 August 2022, titled "Opportunities in Blue Economy of Bangladesh." In the discussion, the speakers urged that the government should formulate a specific plan to identify the exact areas in the sea with resources to tap the possibilities of the blue economy by attracting investors in this sector. They also suggested the authorities to form a separate ministry to ease the investment process in this sector and make policies.

The speakers said that Bangladesh could earn \$10 billion annually by introducing 1,000 vessels to carry products through the sea routes, employing around 50,000 people.

CCCI president Mahbabul Alam inaugurated the discussion with his welcome speech, while Wasfi Tamim, CEO of Bangladesh Center of Excellence, moderated the event.

Mahbabul Alam said that the vast water area of 1,18,813 square kilometers and about 710 kilometers of a coastal area full of biodiversity and natural resources has made the country's blue economy very promising. But much of this fortune is yet to be explored. Because of the situation, the government has included a specific chapter in its Vision 2041 styled Bangladesh Perspective Plan 2021-2041 (PP 2041) on Blue Economy.

Mabubul Alam stressed the need to formulate policies and



strategic frameworks to encourage private investment with appropriate incentives and legislation.

Zafar Alam, member (admin and planning) of Chattogram Port Authority (CPA), presented the keynote speech. He said there is enormous potential and prospect in the blue economy, which can have a vital impact on our economy.

Zahir Uddin Ahmed, former chief of naval staff of the Bangladesh Navy, mentioned the importance of available data on marine fish exploration.

Engineer Abdur Rashid, managing director of Karnaphuly Ship Builders Ltd, stated that we have many ministries to manage the activities on the land, but for the vast maritime area, we do not have any ministry despite enormous resources.

The speakers said the country depends mainly on specific export earnings and remittances. Still, it has enormous potential to export marine resources such as seaweeds to diversify its export baskets.

Tarafder Md Ruhul Amin, vice president of CCCI and managing director of SAIF Power Group, highlighted that in the last 10 years, we had spent \$95 billion on freight charges, of which 85%-90% has gone to foreign companies.

Shahriar Jahan Rahat, deputy managing director at KSRM Group, said we need to increase the number of export vessels. The oceangoing vessels earned nearly \$1 billion last year. If we compare it with Indonesia, they have 27,000 vessels, but we have only 80 vessels. If we can increase the number to 1,000, we will earn \$10 billion yearly from this sector.

Engineer Golam Sarwar, chairman of Prantick Group; Md Rashed, chairman of Reliance Shipping; Rashed H Chowdhury, Chattogram bureau chief of The Daily Bonik Barta; Shamsuddin Illius, Chattogram bureau chief of The Business Standard, Engineer Iftekhar Hosen, in-charge of CCCI Research, Development and Training subcommittee, and convener of the same committee Salauddin Yousuf also joined the discussion as panelists.

## BIWTC to Launch 3 Cruise Ships to Boost Coastal, Regional Tourism

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) will launch three cruise vessels for the first time in the country that will operate trips in the coastal belts and on the Chattogram-Kolkata route.

The 3 Cruise Ships can carry 160 passengers and 74 crew members. Once the ships are launched, they hope other international cruise ship operators may show interest in coming

to Bangladesh, increasing the flow of foreign tourists.

Tour operators said that the initiative would be a milestone for the country as there is still no cross-border cruise ship in Bangladesh, and the country is not included in the international cruise line due to bureaucratic barriers. Md Ziaul Islam, chief marine construction (ac) and project director, BIWTC, said all vessels would have the same design and capacity. According to



the contract, we will get these in the last quarter of 2023, and each vessel will cost Tk 77 crore.

He added that along with sailing on the rivers, these luxurious

vessels could also travel within 20 nautical miles of the sea. But it cannot travel in the deep sea. The vessel will travel from Dhaka to Chattogram, Khulna, and Kolkata on river and sea routes.

## Bangladesh Ranks 3rd in Producing Freshwater Fish



Bangladesh ranked third in producing freshwater fish, behind China and India. The South Asian nation is now also the third biggest aquaculture producer in the world.

Apart from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Uganda are among the top four countries in the world where freshwater fish production increased.

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The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations came up with the information in a report titled 'The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)-2022' which published every two consecutive years. According to the report, despite various obstacles, three countries are setting an example in farmed fish production. The countries are – Bangladesh and Vietnam in Asia and Egypt in Africa.

It has been said about Bangladesh that 11 percent of the world's freshwater fish are now being produced in Bangladesh. The total amount is about 13 lakh tons.

According to the report, Bangladesh is the world's second-largest producer of freshwater finfish. Hilsa is among these. A total of 1.3 million tons of fish, including about six lakh tons of hilsa, is extracted from open water bodies in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is ranked No. 1 in the world in hilsa fish production.

Bangladesh ranks 26th in extracting sea fish. The country collects 6.80 lakh tons of fish from the sea. The top five countries in the world for catching marine fish are China, Indonesia, Peru, Russia, and the United States.

## UN Head Declares 'Ocean Emergency' as Global Leaders Gather in Lisbon



The UN secretary-general has declared that the world is in the middle of an "ocean emergency", and urged governments to do more to restore ocean health.

Speaking at the opening of the UN ocean conference in Lisbon, Portugal, attended by global leaders and heads of state from 20 countries, António Guterres said that we had taken the ocean for granted, and today we face what I would call an ocean emergency. We must turn the tide.

Guterres said that the "egoism" of some nations was hampering

efforts to agree on a long-awaited treaty to protect the world's oceans. In March, UN member states were criticized by scientists and environmentalists for disagreeing on a blueprint for protecting the high seas against exploitation. Of the 64% of the high seas that lie beyond territorial limits, only 1.2% are currently protected.

Guterres said that low-level nations and coastal cities face flooding, pollution is creating vast coastal dead zones, and overfishing is "crippling fish stocks."



Nearly 80% of the world's wastewater is discharged into the sea without treatment, while at least 8m tonnes of plastic enters the oceans each year.

In his opening remarks, he said that we could not have a healthy planet without a healthy ocean.

The secretary-general referred to the positive news since the last UN Ocean conference in 2017, including progress on a legally binding instrument to conserve and protect biodiversity in waters beyond national jurisdiction. His speech included part of the draft UN high seas treaty and the last World Trade Organization agreement to curb harmful fishing subsidies. He also issued a call to governments to raise their ambitions on global health.

The conference's theme was the critical need for scientific knowledge and marine technology to build ocean resilience. Guterres called for a "goal of mapping 80% of the seabed by 2030".

He made several recommendations, including sustainable management that could help the ocean produce six times as much food and generate 40 times as much renewable energy

as it currently, and protecting the oceans and people in coastal areas from the impacts of the climate crisis.

More than 3.5 billion people depend on the ocean for food security, while 120 million work directly in fisheries and aquaculture-related activities, the majority in small-island developing states and least developed countries. Yet SDG14 (to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas, and marine environment for sustainable development) is the least funded of all the SDGs, Guterres said.

The draft declaration of the conference acknowledges the world's collective failure to achieve SDG14 and commits to reversing the ocean's health. Still, it does not elaborate on how to achieve this. It also refers to the need for financing for developing countries to help implement Marine Protected Areas.

The final draft of the political declaration is expected to be adopted at the end of the conference. Negotiations between nations on the critical instrument to protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030 – the global ocean treaty – are expected to occur in New York in August.

## MDA: Core of Security Cooperation in BIMSTEC



On June 6 this year, the Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the regional organization exclusive to the Bay, celebrated its 25th anniversary in Sri Lanka.

The past months have been a flurry of activity for the organization, with it adopting a Charter for the first time at its fifth Summit Meeting and also rationalizing its 14 sectors of cooperation into seven broad areas for better functionality. One of these seven areas is 'Security', which houses the erstwhile

independent sectors of 'Counter-Terrorism and Trans-national Crime', 'Disaster Management, and 'Energy', all under India's lead.

However, for any security framework to work, there is a need for information or awareness about the ongoing activities in that domain. As the theatre of security cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region is largely the Bay itself, Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is the need of the hour for BIMSTEC.

# Blue Economy: Dhaka Calls for Joint Efforts to Harness Marine Resources



Bangladesh has sought a joint blue economy approach to harness the untapped marine resources that can be useful in tackling poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, energy crisis, and ecological imbalances towards strengthening the sustainable development process.

Secretary (Maritime Affairs Unit) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rear Admiral (Retd) Md Khurshed Alam highlighted that Oceans are the potential and versatile resource frontiers for humankind but remain under-explored unexploited.

Bangladesh, along with some other countries, co-hosted the event titled "Fostering international and regional cooperation in support of the sustainable development of the blue economy in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS" organized by the International Seabed Authority (ISA) on Wednesday on the sidelines of the second UN Ocean Conference being held in Lisbon, Portugal.

The vice-president of Tanzania, foreign and tourism minister of Tonga, minister of international development of Norway, ministers, high representatives, and experts from the member states also attended the event, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Khurshed emphasized the need to foster international and regional cooperation to develop strategies to support the sustainable development of the blue economy in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

He elaborated that states and organizations in developing regions may not have the capacity to develop and manage their own shared marine resources as they lack the necessary information, expertise or financial capacity to follow through with planning and operations.

Panelists opined that regional and international cooperation is crucial to developing marine scientific knowledge and research capacity to leverage the benefits offered by the blue economy.

They said the transfer of technology could create enabling conditions for the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS to participate effectively in the blue economy's existing and emerging ocean sectors. Representatives also viewed strongly that strategic partnership is necessary for harnessing the benefits of the blue economy. The seminar was wrapped up with commitments to forging wider regional and international cooperation, devising mechanisms for technology transfer and financing the blue economy.

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## US Coast Guard Team Satisfied with Security Arrangements at Port: CPA



Visiting Chattogram Port to scrutinize compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) code, the two-member US Coast Guard delegation expressed overall satisfaction with security arrangements at the facility, according to the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA).

CPA Deputy Director (security and operations) Major Md Wahidul Haq said that US Coast Guard delegates applauded the port authority for managing commercial vessels within its area in the Bay of Bengal. It will be implemented with its Vessel Traffic Management System (VMS), monitoring 95% of port yard space by CCTV cameras and controlling movement at the port entrances.

The delegates visited Eastern Refinery Ltd and Incontrade Limited, a private Inland Container Depot (ICD), on June 2022. The team also inspected the port's overall activities, including its yard, jetty, container freight stations (CFS), port entrances, and CCTV cameras.

Since 2004, the International Maritime Organisation, or IMO, has mandated implementing the ISPS code for security in ports worldwide. Chattogram Port is implementing compliance with this code.

ISPS teams have visited Chattogram port six times so far. The last visit was in August 2019.

## Bangladesh, India for Strengthening Cooperation in Water Management, Cyber, Food Security

Bangladesh and India (June 19, 2022) agreed to work closely to strengthen cooperation in common rivers and water resources management. They pledged to expand collaboration in cyber security, IT, and food security.

The decision was taken at the seventh meeting of the Joint Commission co-chaired by Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar at the

Hyderabad House, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

A joint statement said the two countries reiterated the importance of the safe, speedy, and sustainable return of "the forcibly displaced persons (Rohingya refugees) from the Rakhine state to Myanmar, currently being sheltered by Bangladesh." In his opening remarks at the JCC meeting, Momen said that because of the growing mutual dependency



of the economies of Bangladesh and India, the two countries need collective efforts for early recovery from economic devastations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions due to the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine.

He said that Bangladesh had made a strong recovery from the pandemic, but the volatility of markets following the Ukraine conflict is a cause for concern. Momen also said that we need collective, collaborative efforts to sustain our economic growth and maintain regional peace, security, and stability.

The Bangladesh foreign minister highlighted that our shared history, geography, culture, values, and commitment to peace, security, and development had given us unique confidence to forge partnerships not only on the bilateral front but on a wide range of issues in various regional and multilateral forums.

He added that we had attained tangible results in many areas, such as settling land and maritime boundary demarcation, security, connectivity, development cooperation, cultural exchange, power and energy, trade and commerce, blue economy, defense, and so on.

The ministers expressed satisfaction that despite challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the two countries had worked closer than ever in every sector. This includes security and border management to mutually beneficial trade and investment flows, enhanced bilateral and sub-regional multimodal connectivity, greater power and energy cooperation, developmental assistance and capacity-building exchanges, and cultural and closer people-to-people ties. In his opening remarks, Jaishankar said that India looked forward

to working with Bangladesh to take bilateral ties to new domains – Artificial Intelligence, cyber security, startups, and Fintech.

He also said that the two countries must work together on comprehensive management and conservation of 54 common rivers and our shared environmental responsibility, especially the Sundarbans.

The Indian minister told that the better management of the India-Bangladesh long border is also a key priority, and our border guarding forces are committed to combating trans-border crimes. We must continue working together to ensure that the border remains crime-free.

Jaishankar pointed out that India looks at subregional cooperation in power, mainly hydropower. India, he pointed out, is both the largest producer and consumer of energy in the region and would be pleased to work with Bangladesh to structure a progressive partnership in the areas of production, transmission, and trade of electricity.

Jaishankar said that our ties today reflect the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

This was the first in-person JCC meeting since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the previous edition held virtually in 2020.

It was agreed that the next round of India-Bangladesh JCC will be held in Bangladesh in 2023.

# খুশিলি রাবার ফ্যাক্টরি

রাবার যন্ত্রাংশ তৈরীর বিশেষ প্রতিষ্ঠান



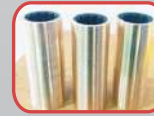
মান অম্মত রাবার যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহের মাধ্যমে কাস্টমারের মঙ্গলই আমাদের একমাত্র লক্ষ্য

- ★ স্যাম্পল অথবা ড্রইং প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে যে কোন ধরনের রাবার স্পেয়ার্স তৈরী করা হয়।
- ★ উন্নত কাঁচামাল ব্যবহার করে আন্তর্জাতিক মানের বিদেশী মেশিনে প্রতিটি রাবার স্পেয়ার্স তৈরী করা হয়।
- ★ আধুনিক ল্যাবরেটরীতে প্রতিটি রাবার স্পেয়ার্স নিরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে মান নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।
- ★ প্রতিটি রাবার আইটেম কোয়ালিটি কন্ট্রোল সেল দ্বারা Qualified হওয়া সাপেক্ষে সরবরাহ করা হয়।
- ★ আমাদের কার্যক্রম আন্তর্জাতিক ক্লাসিফিকেশন সোসাইটি **Bureau Veritas** দ্বারা সনদ প্রাপ্ত।



## আমাদের প্রোডাক্ট সম্ভারঃ

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## BIMRAD Participated in IONS HADR Workshop 2022 on 'Cooperative Approaches for Effective HADR Operations in the Indian Ocean Region'



Bangladesh Navy organized the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) Workshop on 24th August 2022 at the Hotel Radisson Blu in Dhaka. The workshop was held on the theme of 'Cooperative Approaches for Effective HADR Operations in the Indian Ocean Region'. Besides the host country, representatives of the ten member countries of the IONS HADR Working Group participated in the workshop, both in-person and on the virtual platform. Rear Admiral Mohammad Mozammel Haque, OSP, NUP, ndc, psc, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel), Bangladesh Navy graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The opening ceremony started after the Chief Guest's arrival with the Holy Quran's recitation. Afterward, the President of the Seminar Committee and the Director General of BIMRAD, Capt M Minarul Hoque, (H), BCGM, psc, BN delivered a welcome speech. Cdre M Hasan Tarique Mondal, (G), NPP, ndc, psc, BN, Director of Naval Operations delivered the keynote speech of the workshop. Then, two seminar sessions were held to discuss the topics at length. In the first session, three of the IONS HADR Working Group member countries, Australia, India and Iran presented their seminar papers. It was followed by a presentation on experience sharing by Mr. Syed Ashraf Ul Islam from Department of Disaster Management, Bangladesh. In the second session, another three member countries, namely Maldives, Thailand and

France presented their papers, and the Chair of the Department of Disaster Science and Climate Resilience, Dhaka University, Dr. Md. Zillur Rahman spoke on knowledge sharing and policy recommendations about HADR activities. Both of the seminar sessions ended with lively open discussions, and the sessions were moderated by Capt Ahmed Amin Abdullah, (G), BSP, psc, BN. The workshop ends with the concluding remarks by the President of the Seminar Committee. Finally, the Chief Guest delivered his speech focusing on the need for a cooperative framework for the effective HADR operations in Indian Ocean Region. Along with other distinguished guests, research officers from BIMRAD also participated in this workshop.

### Participation in EU CRIMARIO Webinar on 'Narcotics Interdiction on High Seas'



EU Critical Maritime Route Wider Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO) project organizes Tuesdays Second Chance webinar series to

highlight the challenges of maritime operations. This edition of Tuesday 10th May, 2022 examined the case study of the boarding of the F/V Captain Winston in 2004 to analyze the issues related to conduct of narcotics interdictions on the high seas.

Andrew Mallia, the Law Enforcement and Capacity Building Expert of the CRIMARIO project, was the session's Keynote Speaker. He served as a naval officer within the Armed Forces of Malta for 25 years. Firstly, He examined the operation facts to board the F/V Captain Winston, west of the island of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean Sea. The actions to board the vessel and the subsequent inspection revealed that the vessel was being used to traffic narcotics leading to the seizure of the vessel and the arrest of her crew. The Keynote Speaker presented the unfolding of these events and the decisions that affected the outcome. He examined the responsibilities and obligations of enforcement officers towards persons in their custody, the issue of preparing personnel to deal with detaining suspects under challenging conditions at sea, and the lessons learnt from this case study. Research Officers from BIMRAD, participated in the webinar.

## BIMRAD Participated in the Consultative Policy Dialogue



A roundtable consultative policy dialogue was organized by the Bangladesh Planning Commission on "Institutionalization of The Blue Economy in Bangladesh" on Saturday, 14 May 2022 at 03:30 pm at the Carnival Hall, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka. Dr. Ahmed Kaikau, Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the policy dialogue as the Chief Guest. Ms. Zuena Aziz, Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs), Prime Minister's Office was present as Special Guest. Rear Admiral M. Khurshed Alam, Secretary (MAU), Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the dialogue as the Guest of Honour. Mr. Pradip Ranjan Chakraborty, Secretary, Planning Division presided over the session.

Dr. Md. Kawser Ahmed, Member (Secretary), General Economics Division, Planning Commission unfolded the

requirement of institutionalization of the Blue Economy in Bangladesh; and its problem, prospects and actions in his keynote presentation. Mr. Aminul Arifeen, Project Manager, Social Security Policy Support Program, UNDP also presented a paper where he highlighted the issues of the Blue Economy and its prospect of social protection in Bangladesh. Besides these presentations and speeches by the honourable guests, various schools of thought and proposals on the Blue Economy were discussed in the two open discussion sessions. Along with other distinguished guests, the Acting Chairman Rear Admiral Mohammed Mahbub-ul Islam, BSP, ndc, psc and other officials from BIMRAD participated in the dialogue.

## Participation in BIPSS—Dhaka Tribune Roundtable on 'Revisiting the Rohingya Crisis: What Lies Ahead?'



Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and Dhaka Tribune jointly organize a monthly roundtable on a contemporary geopolitical issue. The most recent one, held on 22nd May 2022, focused on 'Revisiting the Rohingya Crisis: What Lies Ahead?'

A panel of experts comprising two distinguished speakers discussed the given topic. Asif Munier, national expert on migration and displacement, and Air Vice Marshal (retd) Mahmud Hussain, distinguished expert at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University, spoke at the event as panellists. The speakers agreed that Bangladesh will have to remain incessantly engaged bilaterally, regionally and globally to resolve the complex and protracted Rohingya crisis despite the lack of progress over the past few years. They also highlighted the security aspect of the issue as failure to resolve the crisis quickly will have consequences of multiple dimensions, including radicalism. BIPSS Senior Fellow Shafqat Munir moderated the roundtable that was attended by academia, local and foreign diplomats, former and serving government officials, journalists, and university students. Nur Ahmed, Research Officer (Maritime Affairs and Security), represented BIMRAD at the roundtable.

## BIMRAD's Participation in BIISS Seminar on 'Promoting Multilateral Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling'



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organized a hybrid seminar on 'Promoting Multilateral Cooperation to Prevent Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling' on 25th May 2022. H. E. Charles Whiteley, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The inaugural seminar was kicked off with the welcome speech of the Director General of BIISS, Major General Mohammad Maksudur Rahman, OSP, BSP, psc. It was followed by the speech of the Chief Guest who praised the Government of Bangladesh's efforts in reducing human trafficking and noted that the EU is supporting Bangladesh in this regard. The Chairman of BIISS, Ambassador Kazi Imtiaz Hossain chaired the introductory session. Afterwards, a working session chaired by Professor Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, University of Dhaka, was organized to highlight on the contemporary issues of human trafficking. A panel of four distinguished subject-matter experts presented their research findings. Speakers laid emphasis on joint efforts and broader cooperation to prevent human trafficking and migrant smuggling. It was followed by a vibrant Q&A session featuring questions and comments regarding the challenges in preventing human trafficking. Research Officers from BIMRAD in this distinguished program.

## BIMRAD Participated in "Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 International Conference: Issues and Challenge of Implementation"

An International Conference titled "Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 International Conference: Issues and Challenge of Implementation" was held in the Pan Pacific Sonargaon on



26 May, 2022. The General Economics Division of the Bangladesh Planning Commission and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh jointly organized the conference.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina participated in the International Conference through a videoconference from Ganobhaban. She urged the country's development partners to help implement the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 which seeks sustainable development for future generations.

She said the 100-year Delta Plan, approved by her government in 2018, is a techno-economic master plan based on information technology and knowledge. "It's phased implementation will require about 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2025," she added.

The two-day event was enlightened with the participation of policymakers, researchers, teachers, development activists and development partners from home and abroad. Focusing on the government's successes, Hon'ble Prime Minister said that now the per capita income has risen to USD2,824, the GDP growth rate has reached 7.25 per cent and 100 per cent of people have been brought under electricity coverage.

Agriculture Minister Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, State Minister for Water Resources Zaheed Farooque, State Minister for Planning Shamsul Alam and Dutch Ambassador in Bangladesh Anne Gerard van Leeuwen delivered valuable speeches at the function.

Captain M Minarul Hoque, (H), BCGM, psc, BN, Director General, BIMRAD, took part in the conference.

## Research Team from BIMRAD Visited Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARSSO)

A research team from the BIMRAD visited the Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO) on Thursday, 02 June 2022, at about 1100 hrs. The team was received by the SPARRSO officials. Both teams shared their views and ideas on sea fish production, space and remote sensing technologies, present research gaps, data sharing and future joint research opportunities in Maritime sectors. During this visit, BIMRAD research team explored the SPARRSO





water resources division and agriculture division and their laboratories. It was a very delightful event for both parties.

## BIMRAD Maritime Dialogue on “Prospects and Challenges of Ocean Shipping in Bangladesh”



Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development (BIMRAD) organized the first episode of BIMRAD Maritime Dialogue on the topic “Prospects and Challenges of Ocean Shipping in Bangladesh” on 06 June 2022, 0930-1130 (BST),

Rear Admiral M Shahjahan NPP, BCGMS, ndc, psc, BN Chairman, Chittagong Port Authority delivered his speech as the lead presenter in the maritime Dialogue. His excellent presentation included the immense potentialities and improvements within the Ocean Shipping area in Bangladesh and advocated the country's capacity building.

In line with that, the reputable commentators – Commodore A Z M Jalal Uddin (C), PCGM, ndc, psc, BN Director-General, Department of Shipping; Mr Mehrul Karim, representative from Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Rear Admiral A S M Abdul Baten (E), BSP, ndc, psc, PhD, BN (retd), Secretary-General, Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners' Association; Capt. Syed Sohel Hasnat, Director, Bangladesh Shipping Agents' Association; Capt. Golam Mohiuddin

Quadrey, Vice President, Bangladesh Merchant, Marine Officers' Association; Commodore S M Moniruzzaman (C), OSP, ndc, ncc, psc, BN, Managing Director, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation Commodore Syed Ariful Islam (TAS), ndc, psc, BN (retd), Ex DG Shipping opined on different aspect of ocean shipping in Bangladesh. A threadbare discussion took place in the session and many important issues surfaced in the dialogue with a couple of important recommendations. A good number of proficient maritime scholars, professionals, stakeholders, academicians, and researchers participated in the Dialogue and exchanged perspectives and considerate reviews to cope with the issues.

Rear Admiral Mohammed Mahbub-ul Islam, BSP, ndc, psc, Acting Chairman of BIMRAD, welcomed all participants to the Dialogue. Rear Admiral Muhammad Anwarul Islam NGP, ndc, afwc, psc, BN (retd) chaired the entire session. Captain M Minarul Hoque, (H), BCGM, psc, BN, Director General, BIMRAD, delivered concluding remarks and gave a vote of thanks to all participants.

## Participation in NOAMI Webinar on the Occasion of United Nations World Oceans Day 2022



National Oceanographic and Maritime Institute (NOAMI) organized a webinar on 09 June 2022 on the occasion of United Nations World Oceans Day 2022. The webinar focused on the issue of international law and maritime disputes. The program was designed keeping the theme of World Oceans Day in mind – Revitalization: Collective Action for the Ocean.

The seminar started with the welcome speech of the Chair of the session Prof. Dr. A S M Maksud Kamal, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka. Rear Admiral (Retd) Md Khurshed Alam, MPhil, ndc, psc, Secretary, Maritime Affairs Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh delivered the keynote speech. He started his presentation with a brief outline of the global legal regime on maritime disputes. Then, he shared the detailed trajectories of the settlement of Bangladesh's maritime

disputes with Myanmar and India. He candidly shared his experiences with the legal procedures focusing on the challenges and strategies of Bangladesh in these two cases. Dr. Mohan Kumar Das, Executive Director, NOAMI moderated the whole session. Research Officers from BIMRAD participated in the session.

## BIMRAD's Participation in BISS Seminar on 'Changing Global Order: Securing Bangladesh's national Interest'



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organized a hybrid seminar on 'Changing Global Order: Securing Bangladesh's national Interest' on 16th June 2022. H. E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP, Honourable Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The inaugural seminar was started with the welcome speech of the Director General of BISS, Major General Mohammad Maksudur Rahman, OSP, BSP, psc. It was followed by the Chief Guest's speech reflecting Bangladesh's foreign policy. He said that the country engages with the world on its own terms to accomplish a well-balanced policy. The Chairman of BISS, Ambassador Kazi Imtiaz Hossain chaired the introductory session. Afterwards, a working session chaired by Ambassador Shamsher M. Chowdhury, BB, Former Foreign Secretary, was organized. A panel of four distinguished subject-matter experts presented their research findings. Professor Dr. Rashed Uz Zaman, University of Dhaka, outlined the theoretical difficulty of defining 'global order' and opined that one should focus on the definition nuances before identifying any changes in the global order. Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Country Economist of UNDP Bangladesh presented the current trajectory of Bangladesh's preparation to graduate out of LDC and highlighted the challenging sectors and possible solutions. Dr. Razia Sultana, Research Fellow of BISS provided a comprehensive depiction of the priorities of Bangladesh's foreign policy. The last presenter, ASM Tarek Hassan Semul, Research Fellow of BISS provided

an excellent depiction of Bangladesh's strategies to navigate through the complex geopolitical constellations in the Indo-Pacific. It was followed by a vibrant Q&A session featuring questions and comments. Research Officers from BIMRAD participated in this distinguished program.

## BIMRAD Participated in World Hydrography Day-2022



Bangladesh Navy observed the World Hydrography Day-2022 with this year's theme: 'Hydrography- Contributing to the United Nations Ocean Decade' on 21 June 2022.

To observe the day, a seminar was organized at BNS ISSA KHAN Area Multipurpose Hall, Chattogram, under the management of the Chief Hydrographer of the Bangladesh Navy.

Commander Chattogram Naval Area Rear Admiral M Nazmul Hassan was present as the chief guest. High officials from various maritime organizations, members and representatives of the National Hydrographic Committee, Port Authorities, Universities, Maritime Research and Training Institutes and many Hydrographers were present at the seminar.

The speakers, hydrographers and experts emphasized the enhancement of cooperation and coordination between the stakeholders related to Hydrography for promoting the Blue Economy of Bangladesh. They also discussed sustainable ocean management, remote sensing in oceanography, blue Economy and the importance of ocean literacy in achieving the UN Ocean Decade Goal in the seminar.

BN Chief Hydrographer Commodore A K M Sherafullah of Bangladesh Navy delivered the welcome speech. The Director Hydrography and Director General of Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development (BIMRAD) Captain M Minarul Hoque presented the keynote paper. Through observing the theme of this year's World Hydrographic Day, the maritime community, scientists and policymakers are expected to become more aware of the important contribution of Hydrography to the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

## Participation in BIPSS—Dhaka Tribune Roundtable on ‘The Changing Dynamics of the Middle East: Implications for Bangladesh’



Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and Dhaka Tribune jointly organize monthly roundtables on contemporary geopolitical issues. The most recent one, held on 29 June 2022, focused on ‘The Changing Dynamics of the Middle East: Implications for Bangladesh’

A panel of experts comprising two distinguished speakers discussed the given topic. Dr Lailufar Yasmin, Professor at the Department of International Relations of Dhaka University, and Parvez Karim Abbasi, Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics of East West University, spoke at the event as panellists. The speakers opined that Bangladesh needs to continue maintaining a strategic relationship with Middle Eastern states as the country is dependent on fossil fuels and foreign remittance. Mr. Abbasi presented a comprehensive overview of the importance of the Middle East countries on the global front and the constant political instability in the region. Dr Lailufar Yasmin dwelt on how the Middle East States are often misperceived as a unified region, which is not the case in reality in terms of governance and power-sharing. BIPSS President Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (ret) and Dhaka Tribune Editor Zafar Sobhan jointly moderated the roundtable. Nur Ahmed, Research Officer (Maritime Affairs and Security), represented BIMRAD at the roundtable.

## BIMRAD’s Participation in BISS Hybrid Seminar on ‘Blue Economy and Maritime Security: Bangladesh perspective’

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organized a hybrid seminar on ‘Blue Economy and Maritime Security: Bangladesh perspective’ on 21st July 2022. H. E. Dr. Shamsul Alam, Honorable Minister of State, Ministry



of Planning, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The inaugural seminar was started with the welcome speech of the Director General of BISS, Major General Mohammad Maksudur Rahman, OSP, BSP, psc. It was followed by the presentation of the Special Guest, Rear Admiral Md Khurshed Alam, BN (ret), Secretary of Maritime Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his speech as the Chief Guest, State Minister for Planning Dr Shamsul Alam proposed to establish a separate ministry for the blue economy or a separate division under the Ministry of Science and Technology. He emphasized the contribution of the blue economy to Bangladesh’s future sustainable development endeavours. The Chairman of BISS, Ambassador Kazi Imtiaz Hossain chaired the introductory session. Afterwards, a working session chaired by Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), was held. A panel of four distinguished subject-matter experts presented their research findings. It was followed by an interactive (Q&A) session. Along with the other guests, Research Officers from BIMRAD joined this distinguished program.

## Participation in BIPSS—Cosmos Foundation Roundtable on ‘A World in Turmoil: The Fallout from the Ukraine Conflict’

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) organizes a monthly roundtable on a contemporary geopolitical issue. The most recent one, held on 27th July 2022, focused on ‘A World in Turmoil: The Fallout from the Ukraine Conflict’. BIPSS and Cosmos Foundation jointly organized the program.

A panel of experts comprising three distinguished speakers discussed the given topic. Md Touhid Hossain, Former foreign secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh; Umme Salma Tarin, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Bangladesh University



of Professionals (BUP); and Parvez Karim Abbasi, Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics of East West University, spoke at the event as panellists. The speakers opined that Bangladesh remains in a good position in the context of the ongoing global crisis with workable human resources, food production and geographical location, but emphasized on enhancing energy exploration along with a diversified policy for conventional and renewable. The speakers and the participants agreed that Bangladesh should focus on resolving the problems in its economic sector as early as possible to withstand the fallout of any global crisis. BIPSS President Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (retd) and Cosmos Foundation Chairman Enayetullah Khan jointly moderated the roundtable. Nur Ahmed, Research Officer (Maritime Affairs and Security), represented BIMRAD at the roundtable.

## BIMRAD Participated in Seminar on “Integrated Delta Governance and Ocean Management in The Bay of Bengal - Way Ahead”



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University (BSMRMU) organized a maritime seminar on “Integrated Delta Governance and Ocean Management in the Bay of Bengal - Way Ahead” at the International Mother Language Institute, Dhaka, on Sunday, 31 July 2022. The seminar aimed to explore opportunities for mutual partnership to encounter challenges related to climate change and ocean governance in the Bay of Bengal region.

Dr. Dipu Moni MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Education, People's Republic of Bangladesh, was the chief guest of the seminar. At the outset, she humbly paid her most profound tribute to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who prudently underscored the vast importance of the sea for developing a maritime country like Bangladesh and also enacted the Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act 1974.

H.E. Mr Vikram K Doraiswami, High commissioner of India to Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Special guest. Rear Admiral Md Khurshed Alam (retd), Secretary, Maritime Affairs Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented the keynote paper.

During the event, BSMRMU signed MoU for academic collaboration with Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) and National Maritime Foundation (NMF), Delhi. BIMRAD team, along with the Director General, Captain M Minarul Hoque (H), BCGM, PSC, BN participated in the seminar.

## Participation in BIISS Seminar on ‘Bangabandhu’s Vision: Relevance in the Context of 21st Century’



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organized a hybrid seminar on ‘Bangabandhu’s Vision: Relevance in the Context of 21st Century’ on 28th August 2022. H. E. Mr. Anisul Huq, MP, Honourable Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

Mentioning Bangabandhu's memorable motto 'Friendship to all, malice towards none', the Chief Guest said this motto is suitable to build a better world by ensuring peace, cooperation, development, and justice. Dr. Delwar Hossain, Professor of International Relations at the University of Dhaka, chaired the introductory session. Afterwards, the working session was chaired by Professor Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka. A panel of four distinguished Speakers spoke at the working session. It was followed by a vibrant Q&A session featuring questions and comments. Research Officers from BIMRAD participated in this distinguished program.



# Hardship Continues for the People Residing on the Bank of Pussur River

Amir Hossen Amu



Coastal regions are probably the most valuable and economically important area between the land and the sea. Here the ecosystems are highly vulnerable to climate change-induced natural hazards like coastal inundation, tsunamis, salinity intrusion, sea level rise, cyclones, etc. The rising sea level and the increasing intensity of tropical cyclones due to changing climate along the coastal area have undoubtedly expanded the risk and vulnerability of local communities inhabiting ecologically sensitive deltaic tracts of the Southwestern region of Bangladesh.

This phenomenon is affecting the living conditions of the people in the Southwestern coastal region. Here, people are in a constant battle against recurring natural disasters. The regular habitation in this region is changing due to frequent surges and storms. Individuals' sufferings are in an ever-growing state. Every year people are affected by devastating storms. Subsequently, the dreams of many people are getting eradicated.

Sukannya Rani, a 55-year-old woman living on the Bank of Pussur River in Mongla, is one of them. About forty years back, she was married to a young man living in the South Kanainagar of Chilla Union village. Her husband, Mikhail Mridha, was a fisherman. She was living happily with her husband in their house on the river bank. But now she literally has nothing. Her husband died eight years ago, leaving them with only one male child. It was the seventh time she had to abandon her home due to river erosion. Last time the attack of Cyclone Yaas destroyed her house. Frustrated with the current situation, she took a deep breath and said, "We've lost all ancestral lands, and I don't have any permanent address now."

She also added, "We wake up at night when the high tide starts; everything is submerged in the water. We can't make a fire on the stove and are unable to cook our food. This is our everyday picture." While explaining her situation, she was looking at the river with deep sadness in her mind. Presently, she goes fishing with her son in the river. She added, "We

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depend on the river for our livelihood, though the same river took everything away from us.”

Another story was narrated by Jalal Majhi, who arrived in Dhaka six years ago from Mongla, a Southwestern coastal district. He did not lose his land but could no longer cultivate it after tidal waters intoxicated the soil. He now lives with his wife and youngest son and works as a rickshaw puller in Dhaka. His two other sons work at garment factories outside Dhaka, and he can hardly manage any time to meet with them. He said, “My family was affected by river erosion. All our hopes and dreams have gone under the river waters.” He also mentioned that farming and finding drinking water became difficult in his village due to sea level rise and coastal inundation. “Sometimes, people used to walk several kilometers to refill

who was working in an NGO, became unemployed and was forced to manage household expenses with that small income. While talking about the recurring storms and cyclones, she was just crying. She mentioned that her household was destroyed due to erosion and tides over the last few years. She wept and said, “Now we have no land. We have turned into beggars. When clouds are in the sky, and the water level rises in the river, we must rush to the shelter center.”

A family close to her house, Komola Rani (35), is in the same situation. Shortly after 2-3 years of marriage, she started living with her husband Matin Sarker in their ancestral house. Life was comfortable with her only son and her old parents. But, every year, some of their property is washed away by the streams and waves of the Pussur River. The ongoing erosion of this river



their drinking water pots from the reserve ponds, which is the only drinking water source. But things worsened during summer when these little ponds are dried up,” he said. He finally added, “I love my locality, but I was compelled to migrate to the capital to lead a better life.”

Laxmi Karmakar, who is about 70 years old, is another resident of the eroded Pussur River bank. Bended with the burden of her age, she said she was married to Binoy Majhi at 13. Her husband passed away 3 years ago due to a lack of proper medical treatment as well as shortage of money. Her husband owned approximately five acres of land on the shore of that river. Every year she has to relocate her house backward due to river erosion; presently, she has almost nothing except a small house. It seems that her house will be submerged by the river water very soon. The only earning member of her family is her stepson, who works as a day laborer as there is no other option. Laxmi stays with him and her grandchildren. In only 7-8 years, river erosion has left her family in dire straits.

Trishna Debi is a resident on the bank of Pussur River. She has five daughters but no son. All her daughters were married off one after another. Her husband Shoda Nonda Majhi, is not alive. She lives in a tiny house built on others’ land with one of her daughters, whose husband left her. She goes fishing during high and low tides on the river bank and earns about fifty to eighty taka regularly. During the pandemic, her granddaughter,

destroyed 4-5 acres of their land and left them in misery. The only thing that remains now is the tiny house; the river water touches it during the full moon because of the high tides.

Every year cyclones strike this local habitat in the Southwestern part of our country. After 2020, three cyclones hit Mongla and the surrounding areas of Sundarban. The most recent was Cyclone Yaas, which hit on 26 May 2021. The alarming rise of water and the recurring hostility of cyclones threaten the future of around 20,000 families living in the ten villages on the banks of the Pussur River. People like Sukannya Rani, Laxmi Karmokar, Trishna Debi, and Komola Rani from South Kanainagar’s village faced the same fate. Losing everything in cyclones and river erosion, they are struggling with survival. According to Dr. Abdullah Harun Chowdhury, Chairman of the Department of Environmental Science Discipline, Khulna University, climate change is the main reason behind the natural disasters in this area. The sea absorbs most of the carbon gasses responsible for global warming and gets more heated responsible for producing frequent disasters. With such a loss of environmental equilibrium, nature is becoming hostile and causing increased natural disasters like cyclones and tornadoes.

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