



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
FROM BANGLADESH ECONOMIC ZONES AUTHORITY (BEZA)

“
We do not want to let anyone set up factories anywhere haphazardly as we are developing 100 economic zones across the country. We'll stop giving utility connections to discourage unplanned industrialisation. We advise businesses to establish factories in the economic zones and we have to start it now.
”
Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

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BANGABANDHU SHILPANAGAR: A NEW BANGLADESH IS RISING FAST

-Sheikh Saqid

Thousands of grazing buffaloes and birds in all beautiful feathers and colours chirping and circling above wetlands give the pristine Mirsarai coastline in Bangladesh's south an unmistakable air of a country in its full rural glories.

But here on this massive 33,000 acres of newly reclaimed land from the Bay of Bengal, a new Bangladesh is rising from nowhere – a new Golden Bengal, reclaiming its glorious manufacturing past after centuries of subjugation and foreign rule.

Amid the humming sounds of excavators, thousands of workers are building and developing what will in the next years shape up into one of the world's largest industrial parks, ready to transform Bangladesh into a new manufacturing hub of the world. Coronavirus pandemic may have ground the global economy to a screeching halt, but the development work at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpanagar is going on in full swing so that once a breakthrough against Covid-19 is found, the country's largest industrial park could

be ready for business.

"What we are building here is a bold new dream to emerge as an industrial power in the world," Paban Chowdhury, the executive chairman of the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), told this correspondent during a recent visit to the park.

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BEZA is developing at least 100 EZs across the country as Dhaka embarks on a bold new dream to become a new Asian Tiger.

The Bangabandhu Shilpanagar at Mirsarai, which is 50 kilometres from the country's largest port, is the most ambitious of this dream as it is being prepared to house hundreds of world class manufacturing plants.

"Already, we have signed 19 billion dollar worth of investment deals for this industrial zone," Chowdhury said, belting out names of some of the top global companies which have lined up to invest here.

The Japanese companies, who have already invested heavily in the

country's power, energy and textile sectors are the most eager. "Mitsubishi, Mitsui, Nippon Steel and Sojitz Corporation have shown their keen interest," he said.

The Indians, led by their giant conglomerate Adani Corporation and Asian Paints, who have already started construction of one of the largest paint factories in the region.

Paban Chowdhury, who as a diplomat posted in South East Asia saw first-hand how countries like Thailand graduated into a top middle income economies in less than a generation, is a restless man even in his early 60s.

He does not want to waste a single day despite the fact that the world is battered by the worst pandemic since 1918. Almost every week he travels to the park, either to lay the foundation stone for a new factory, or to oversee the ongoing development work of industrial plots, roads, water desalination and other infrastructures.

"Five years ago, when we started work here we have only 550 acres of land. The whole area was under sea water," he said, showing the huge swathe of land, which was reclaimed from the Bay of Bengal through brilliant feat of engineering by Bangladesh's water development authorities.

Bangladeshi and Chinese engineers built cross dam along Mirsarai coastline, which stretched all the way to the neighbouring district of Feni, in an effort to trap millions of tonnes silts being deposited into the Bay of Bengal by big Himalayan rivers.

Chowdhury said once all the factories are built in the industrial park by the year 2030, this will be Bangladesh's largest industrial town, housing some 1.5 million workers in townships expected to be constructed within years.

"It will be the third largest city in the country, after Dhaka and Chittagong. It will have an international airport, a port and a planned city," he said.

The writer is an eminent journalist.



7TH GOVERNING BOARD MEETING APPROVED 10 MORE ZONES



Honorable Prime Minister Presides over 7th Governing Board Meeting of Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) has got the approval of setting up 10 more economic zones, raising the number of industrial parks under its management to 97. Of the total work in 28 economic zones are currently underway.

The approval came at a virtual meeting of the BEZA Governing Board on August 20, 2020 with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Chair through video conferencing from her Gonobhaban office.

The new zones are Nawabganj Economic Zone, Nawabganj; Tangail Economic Zone, Bhuapur; Sapahar Economic Zone, Sapahar, Naogaon; Dinajpur Economic Zone, Dinajpur

Sadar; Noakhali Economic Zone, Companiganj; Sandwip Economic Zone, Chattogram; Sunamganj Economic Zone, Chhatak, Sunamganj; Pabna Economic Zone, Bera, Pabna; Charmegha Economic Zone, Hijla, Barisal; and Manikganj Economic Zone, Shibalaya, Manikganj.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked BEZA to promote small entrepreneurs, particularly the young generation, alongside attracting foreign investment. "We need to attract and promote our young generation," Prime Minister said.

Sheikh Hasina said the government is setting up special economic zones across the country to attract

investment, create jobs and protect arable and forest lands.

The prime minister said if 100 economic zones could be established as per target of the government, poverty would be alleviated in the country, production and export income would increase and the foundation of the country's economy would be strengthened.

The Prime Minister directed all agencies to take immediate steps to formulate a comprehensive strategy and future action plan to attract investors to Bangladesh in the wake of recent trend in relocations of factories from some major manufacturing hubs during the Covid-19 pandemic.



BEZA BOOSTS ONE-STOP SERVICES TO EASE DOING BUSINESS IN BANGLADESH:



Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) has brought 11 more services under its One Stop Service (OSS) Centre on October 21, 2020, as part of its move to deliver faster services to investors, both foreign and local. With the latest services, BEZA has made a total of 125 services under OSS centre. Among them, investors can avail 48 services through online, a development which was unthinkable a few years ago.

Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister Dr. Ahmad Kaikus launched the services as the chief guest at an event held in Dhaka.

"Only quality of services can bring in a positive change in

the investment scenario and attract foreign investors. Quality services can also improve Bangladesh's position in the global index for ease of doing business," the chief guest noted.

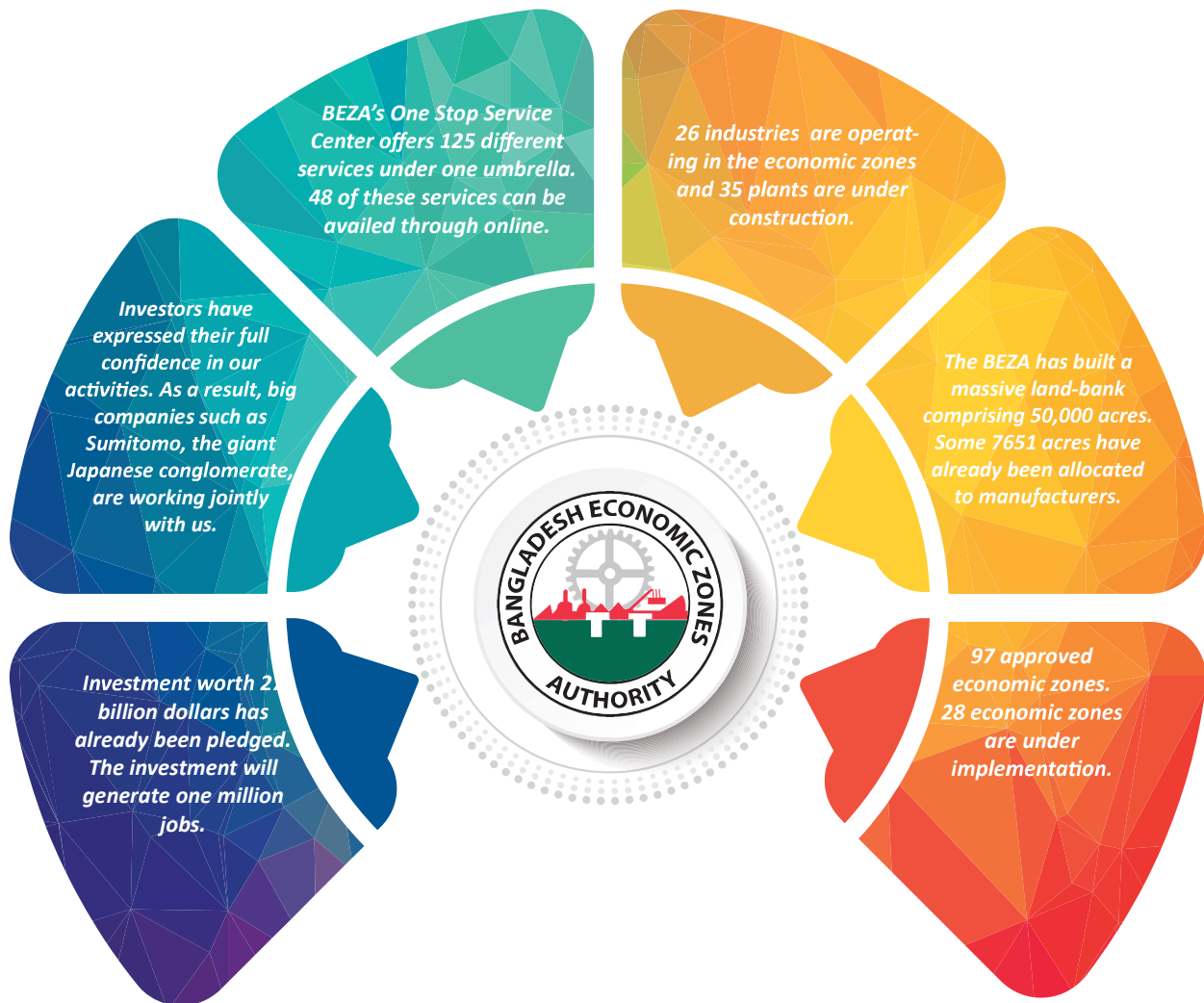
Paban Chowdhury said BEZA has said one-stop services have already earned plaudits from the foreign investors. He said even during the Covid-19 pandemic, all kinds of services are being provided from OSS Centre.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supports the establishment of BEZA OSSC under a technical cooperation project. The project aims to establish the

linkage between foreign and domestic manufacturing industries through the activities aimed at improving business environment and enhancing investment promotion activities, to strengthen economic zones operation and strengthen technical capacity of Bangladeshi manufacturing industries. In 2019 the OSS centre was inaugurated in presence of Private Industry and Investment Advisor to the HPM, Mr. Salman F. Rahman, MP as the Chief Guest and the then Principal Coordinator (SDG) Mr. Md. Abul Kalam Azad as Special Guest.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF BEZA





INVESTMENT SCENARIO & ONGOING LAND ALLOTMENT

The Governing Board of BEZA has so far approved 97 economic zones across the country. Among them 68 economic zones are state-owned and the rest 29 are private. Among these economic zones, two have been set up in public-private ownership, four have been established in Government to Government (G2G) Partnership and three are tourism parks. BEZA owns approximately 48442 acres of land in the state-owned economic zones. And so far some 7,651 acres of land have been allocated to investors, including top multinational companies, who have promised to invest 23.97 billion dollars in their industrial plots. Additional \$3 billion have been invested in Private Economic Zones. Once implemented, this proposed investment is expected to create around one million jobs.

ONGOING LAND ALLOTMENT IN EZS



BEZA RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS FEMOZA AWARD

The Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) has received a prestigious award for its outstanding contribution to Bangladesh's economy. The World Free and Special Economic Zones Federation (FEMOZA), a Geneva-based non-profit organization, has awarded the BEZA for its best practices in its activities. FEMOZA President Juan Torrents handed over the award to BEZA Executive Chairman Mr. Paban Chowdhury at a ceremony in "World Free and Special Economic Zones Summit". The summit, organized by the FEMOZA, was held at Monaco, a tiny European country on the Mediterranean. Representatives of the economic zone authorities from different countries, including Bangladesh, Russia, Thailand, Belarus, Honduras, South Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia, joined the summit.



GREEN ECONOMIC ZONE INITIATIVE

BEZA is committed to the long-term sustainability of the economic zones. As part of it, it is consistently striving to develop economic zones maintaining resilience, sustainability and zero emission.

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The objective of the Green and Resilient Economic Zone (GREZ) guideline is to establish a new national

performance standard for EZs in Bangladesh and thus enhance their competitiveness.

It aims to enhance the sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness of EZs through actions, such as mitigating and avoiding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, pollution, and resource depletion; setting higher labour standards and fostering greater community development; and avoiding and minimising damages and business disruptions from natural disasters and shocks. The guideline also aims to promote and scale the development of GREZs in

Bangladesh through establishing a voluntary GREZ Certification Programme for EZ management entities.

Also, BEZA is steadfast to reduce the impact of negative externalities by including desalination plant, rainwater harvesting system, water treatment plant, central effluent treatment plant, solid waste treatment plant, solar energy production, sewage management and flood management. Avenue plantation all along access road, creation of green belt all around respective plots, greener recreation facilities with beautiful lakes and water bodies remains high on the agenda. Development partners like IFC, GIZ, UNDP, WRG 2030 and World Bank are consistently collaborating with BEZA in many aspects of green industrialization with their technical expertise.

BEZA has begun mandatory plantation of two million trees in economic zones to make them green and environment-friendly.



BEZA SNIPPETS



Honorable Prime Minister Reviews Master plans of Tourism Parks

Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for protecting the natural beauty and biodiversity in three park sites of Sonadia Eco-Tourism Park, Naf Tourism Park and Sabrang Tourism Park in Cox's Bazar, the master plans for which were presented before her on February 19, 2020.

Witnessing the presentation, the PM directed authorities concerned to develop the Sabrang Tourism Park as a dedicated tourist site for foreigners. She asked for completing the development work of Naf Tourism Park and Sabrang Tourism Park within

three years.

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) is implementing the masterplans of Sonadia Eco-Tourism Park developed at Sonadia Island in Maheshkhali, Naf Tourism Park in Teknaf and Sabrang Tourism Park in Teknaf's Sabrang.

The Sonadia Eco-Tourism Park will be established on 8,967 acres of land in phases in nine years. Some 909 acres of the land will effectively come under the planned area, while the rest will be kept as it is. The first-phase of the work will be completed within two years.

The Sabrang Tourism Park is being made on 1,047 acres of land at Sabrang union in Teknaf upazila. The Naf Tourism Park will be made on 271 acres of land on an island under Teknaf Sadar union.

Japanese Envoy visits JEZ

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Mr. Ito Naoki visited Bangladesh Special Economic Zone (Japanese Economic Zone) at Arahazar upazila of Narayanganj on December 1, 2020. Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency

(JICA) in Bangladesh Mr. Hayakawa Yuho and Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) Mr. Paban Chowdhury accompanied him in the call. During the visit, Japanese ambassador said that Japanese investors are very much keen to invest in the exclusive zone dedicated for the Japanese entrepreneurs. He expressed his satisfaction over the development work of the zone. Amid the challenges, work of Japanese Economic Zone is going at full pace which is a good news for the investment, JICA chief said.

Japanese Economic Zone is being built on 1000 acres of land under the Government to Government (G2G) arrangement.



Principal Secretary graces Land Lease Agreement ceremony with two Chinese companies

Two Chinese companies—China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) and JieHong Medical- are going to invest \$28.69 million in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMSN). In this regard, the two companies have taken lease of 18 acres of land from the BEZA in a signing ceremony held on December 13. Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus was present as Chief Guest, whereas, BEZA Executive Chairman Paban Chowdhury presided over the occasion.

The Chinese company CCECC will invest \$15.97 million on 10 acres of land to manufacture export-oriented steel structure and ready-mix concrete and JieHong Medical Products (BD), a subsidiary of Kunshan JieHong Nonwoven Product Company will produce fabrics, gowns, gloves and caps. It will invest Tk.108 crore, equivalent to \$12.72 million.

Bangabandhu Shilpanagar to transform Feni into a developed district

A view exchange workshop has been jointly organized by the BEZA and the Feni district administration on November 12, 2020 to appraise local lawmakers about the ongoing development work at BSMSN.

Nizam Uddin Hazari, the member of parliament of Feni-2 constituency was present at the workshop. He said, Bangabandhu Shilpanagar will bring sustainable development in the entire Feni district. The lawmaker hailed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's efforts to attract much needed foreign direct investment from some of the richest countries in the world.

In his speech, Paban Chowdhury said the economic zones have been set up across the country as parts of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's vision to



transform Bangladesh into a prosperous and developed country. Some 10,000 acres of land at Sonagazi Upazila (Sub-district) in Feni district are part of the Bangabandhu Shilpanagar. BEZA has already acquired some 5767.66 acres of land from the designated area and the acquisition of the rest of the 3,781.89 acres of land is in the final stage.

Land Lease Signed with Inter-Asia

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) signed a deal with Inter-Asia Group on allotment of land in Sabrang Tourism Park in Cox's Bazar.

The Singapore-based firm Inter-Asia Group is likely to invest \$90 million which will generate employment for about 6,000 people.

The signing ceremony was attended by Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus.

Secretary of PMO honors Land Lease Agreement event with Yabang Group

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) signed a land lease agreement with Jiangsu Yabang Dyestuff of China, which is a subsidiary of Yabang Investment Holdings Group Co Limited, for 100 acres developed land. Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Secretary Md. Tofazzel Hossain Miah attended the agreement signing

ceremony as chief guest while BEZA Executive Chairman Paban Chowdhury was in the chair.

Chairman of the Yabang Group Xu Xiaochu joined the function as special guest through online conference while Bangladesh Ambassador to China Mahub Uz Zaman joined it as the guest of honour.

Md. Tofazzel Hossain Miah on this occasion praised Yabang Group for the investment in BEZA estate and said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina remains committed to provide all sorts of support to the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

The group is likely to create employment for 2,200 people and annual export will be around \$146.40 million. Domestic sale is likely to be \$97.60 million.

The Yabang Group is one of the leading companies in the chemical sector with present operating income exceeding 32 billion RMB (\$4.5 billion) in China.





BANGLADESH TO EMERGE AS NEW MANUFACTURING HUB OF ASIA



Bangladesh has become a successful case study before the world since the present government took power in 2009. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been growing at nearly seven percent a year between 2011 and 2019 before the Covid-19 hit the world early this year. The International Monetary Fund in a recent report said Bangladesh will surpass India in per capita GDP at the end of 2020. Bangladesh has already turned a corner during the pandemic and is set to be one of the fastest growing economies in the post Covid-19 world. This amazing success was possible because of political and macroeconomic stability and for visionary leadership of

Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

But Bangladesh will not stop here. It has set its vision to be a developed nation by 2041. Accordingly, the government has liberalised its trade and investment policies, allowing foreign investment in all the key industrial and service areas. Ten years ago Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority was Established to facilitate investment in the country and help investors conduct their business in an investment friendly environment.

BEZA is establishing 100 economic zones including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpanagar, which is expected to be the largest industrial city in the region. It has made sure there is enough land for investment by both foreign and local business groups. It has also set up a One Stop Service Centre for the investors. The OSS Centre has brought all the utility, taxation, administrative and regulatory services under one umbrella so that an investor does not have to face any hassles in setting up his/her factory in any of our economic zones. So far 125 services are now being offered from the OSS Centre.

This month we are launching the BEZA newsletter. The newsletter will enlist all the revolutionary steps we are undertaking for the investors. We are keeping it brief and simple but you still can find out the investments that are being made in our economic zones.

Paban Chowdhury
Executive Chairman



BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB SHILPANAGAR

