

# PM inaugurates re-excavation of historic Patali Canal in Cox's Bazar

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**Online Desk :** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Saturday inaugurated the re-excavation of historic Patali Canal in Pmkhali Union of Cox's Bazar Sadar Upazila, a canal closely associated with the memory of former President Ziaur Rahman. Soon after arriving in Cox's Bazar from Dhaka, the Prime Minister went to Pmkhali and formally launched the re-excavation programme at around 10:50am.

Forty-eight years ago, in November 1979, then President Ziaur Rahman personally inaugurated the excavation of the canal by cutting earth with a spade. During the visit, he also planted a date palm tree on the canal bank, which still stands as a reminder of that historic initiative. Despite heavy rain, Tarique Rahman proceeded to the site and formally inaugurated the re-excavation work by cutting earth with a spade. He also planted an almond sapling on the canal bank.

Home Minister and Cox's Bazar-1 lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed, Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Choudhury Anee, State Minister Farhad Hossain Azad, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Rashiduzzaman Millat, State Minister for LGRD Mir Sahe Alam, State Minister for Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs and Land Mir Md Helal Uddin, State Minister for Textiles and Jute Shariful Alam, Cox's Bazar-3 MP Lutfur Rahman Kajal, Chattogram-10 MP Sayeed Al Noman and Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Md Abdul Mannan were among others present.

Thousands of people from Patali village and surrounding areas gathered along the canal bank from the morning braving heavy rain to witness the programme and greet the Prime Minister.

Patali Canal is regarded as a landmark irrigation project launched during Ziaur Rahman's rule.

According to local officials, the initiative drew international attention at the time. Former World Bank President Robert McNamara, Nepal's King Birendra, Bhutan's King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike visited Bangladesh to observe the country's rural development and agricultural initiatives.

Officials said irrigation from the canal helped bring nearly 12,000 hectares of previously uncultivated land under farming, contributing to a significant boost in agricultural production and the local economy.

However, after remaining operational for several years, the canal gradually became clogged with silt due to inadequate maintenance, while parts of it were encroached upon, disrupting irrigation facilities for local farmers.

The eight-kilometre canal is expected to benefit around 40,000 people once re-excavation is completed, according to local engineers of the Water Resources Ministry.

Local farmer Khorshed Alam said he was delighted to see Tarique Rahman inaugurate the restoration of a canal originally excavated by his father.

"Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman excavated this canal, and today his son has come to restore it. We are happy to see Tarique Rahman in person," he said.

"The canal has become filled up over the years. Once it is re-excavated, we farmers will benefit greatly and will no longer have to worry about irrigation water for our crops," Alam added.

Earlier, the Prime Minister and his wife Dr Zubaida Rahman arrived in Cox's Bazar around 9:50am by air.

After inaugurating the re-excavation work, Tarique Rahman went onto a temporary stage beside the canal and waved to the crowd, exchanging greetings with local residents.