

# Matarbari sea port will serve 3 billion people in Bangladesh and the region

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**Online Desk:** Matarbari could become a regional commercial hub after the deep sea port opens. It will be used as a transshipment port. After Chittagong port, Matarbari will also be a lifeline of the economy. The Matarbari deep sea port will serve about 3 billion people of the region, including Bangladesh. Once fully operational, the port will contribute two to three percent of the country's GDP, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury told UNB.

The deep sea port is now visible. If work continues at this pace, Matarbari deep sea port could be operational from 2026. Construction of the jetty and container yard will start by July. A large number of feeder vessels will come to this port. Money and time will be saved. It will have a great impact on the economy, said the state minister for shipping. He said the port is being constructed on 1,031 acres of land at Matarbari Dhalghat area of Maheshkhali in Cox's Bazar. With the construction of the deep sea port, container ships with a capacity of 8,200 TEU will be able to anchor there.

At present, it takes 45 days to send a consignment of goods from Bangladesh to the United States. Once Matarbari deep sea port is opened, it will reach the designated destination directly in just 23 days, the state minister said. Bangladeshi consignments will no longer have to wait at the ports of Singapore, Colombo and Malaysia.

According to the Chittagong Port Authority, commercial activities at Matarbari deep sea port are expected to start in full swing in 2026. But already over the last two years, 112 cargo ships have arrived at the port. Tk 6.84 crore has been collected from these ships. All equipment for power plant has come through Matarbari port. Due to the depth, any large commercial ship will be able to anchor at this port and there are all kinds of facilities for loading and unloading.

Matarbari is 34 nautical miles from Chittagong port. It takes two-three hours to reach by ship. Its distance by road is about 112 km. A 27 km road is being constructed from Chakaria in Cox's Bazar to Matarbari Dhalghat. Meanwhile, land acquisition for the construction of roads and port has been completed. The channel built for the port is 250 meters wide, 18.5 meters deep and 14.3 meters long. The detailed design of the project has been completed. Besides, contractors are being appointed for the construction of the jetty, collection of ship handling equipment and the purchase of tug boats.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally inaugurate the construction work of the project in the middle of this year. Chittagong Port Authority Chairman Rear Admiral M Shahjahan told UNB that Matarbari's distance from Chattogram by sea is 34 nautical miles, from Payra port it's 190 nautical miles, and from Mongla port it's 240 nautical miles. Therefore, goods from the mother vessel (large container ship) in Matarbari can be transported to other ports by road and sea in a short time.

He also said at present, ships with a draft of only 9.5 metres can berth in the jetties of Chittagong port. However, recently a ship with 10-metre draft has been berthed there. But these ships can carry 800 to a maximum of 2400 TEU containers. A mother vessel has a capacity of 8,000 to 10,000 TEU. Once Matarbari deep sea port opens, container ships with a capacity of over 8,000 TEU will be able to anchor.

The state minister for shipping said the Matarbari Port Development Project has been taken up at an estimated cost of Tk 17,777.20 crore to set up the country's first and only deep sea port. The duration of this project is till December 31, 2026. After the approval of the project, the implementation process was started. He also said the construction of the 14.30 km long approach channel with a length of 350 metres and a depth

of 16 metres has been completed for the construction of the deep sea port. Besides, the construction of 2,150 metre long breakwater on the north side of the approach channel and 670-metre-long breakwater on the southern side has been completed. At present, tenders have been invited in three packages for the construction of a 460 metre long container jetty and a 300 metre long multipurpose jetty and construction of all port facilities, including container yards.

According to project sources, Matarbari port road is being constructed in three phases. A 27 km road from Matarbari to Fasiakhali in Chakaria will be constructed and it will be connected to the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar four-lane highway. The construction period of the road has been fixed from January 2020 to December 2026. If this road is completed, goods can be transported to any place in the country by road.