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President’s Note

I see Bangladesh at a crossroads, in rapid transition that gaining pace every day -from one economy to another, experiencing massive infrastructural development in the construction sector for socio-economic improvement.

Bangladesh was classified as a lower middle-income country in 2015 and we are on track to become middle-income country.

BACI as a major actor in the construction sector playing a significant role for the infrastructural development of the country since its inception. Over the last decade, construction industry have undertaken number of small, middle and Mega project, and the benefits of which nation has been enjoying and directly contributing national GDP.

BACI which represents the construction industry of Bangladesh intended to involve in this development process to produce skill human resources in the construction sector as it is the most prominent earning sector of Bangladesh which contributes nearly 8% to the total GDP. As such, BACI has started skill traning course from April 2015 and is providing skill training course for entry level workers and managment training course for up-skilling of the existing employers to enhance productivity through renowned partner organizations and its own Skill Development Institute(SDI). Sofar, BACI produced 3644 skill labour force from its traning centre and arrenged job oputunities in the labour market and thus, it iscontributing to reduce skill gap in the construction industry. Planning is underway to develop Skill development institute(SDI) as a “Center of excellance for the entire construction industry of the country”.

Engr. Aftabuddin Ahmed
President, BACI
Managing Director, Shamsuddin Mia & Associates Ltd.

Editorial

After stepping to the developing countries, dimensions of challenges have been increased significantly. Outstanding performances in the construction sector has become a new demand. To meet such, our govt. along with different Contractors, Consultants and Employers is working hard.

The Padma bridge is one of the finest infrastructural development of the country. It is a multipurpose road-rail bridge across to the Padma. It will connect 21 southern districts with the capital. The estimated budget of the 6.15 kilometers long bridge is over 91 billion dollars.

Construction of new roads are also likely to be a major improvement to the communication system. Four renowned companies of the country are working in joint venture in SASEC Road Connectivity Project.

Railway has always been the backbone of our communication system. Significant development strategies are in the pipe line along with the ongoing projects. Loop line projects in different corner of the country going to contribute a big deal to the system.

To energize the country's economy, Ruppur power plant has been a great move towards enriching the energy sector. This is going to be the country's first Nuclear power plant which is expected to be ready within 2023.

To know more about such true development of the country, keep an eye to the exclusive collection of "The Construction".

Engr. S.M. Khorsheed Alam
Editor, The Construction
Director, BACI
Managing Director, Dinco Ltd.
BACI's Skills for Employment Investment Programs

Bangladesh Construction Industry (BACI) has been implementing market responsive Skills Training programs since April 2015 under an agreement with SEIP Project, Ministry of Finance, and Government of Bangladesh. BACI will get a grant assistance of Tk.46,000000 (Forty Six crore & nine thousand) provided by Asian development Bank (ADB) for a period of 3 years (February 2015-December 2017).

The objectives of the training programs are:

1. Improve skilling of new entrants and up skilling existing workforce to enhance productivity and growth of construction sectors.
2. Impart skills linked with gainful wage employment or self employment
3. Develop net-work of training providers that are endorsed by the industry.

As per agreement BACI will produce 13005 numbers of skill force in construction sector through market responsive training on 7 trades courses for new entrants and 4 management courses for Up skilling & new entrance. Trade Courses are: (i) Masonry (ii) Plumbing, (iii) Rod Binding & Fabrication (iv) Electrical, (v) Tiles and Marble works (vi) Painting & (vii) Aluminum Fabrication. Management courses are: (i) Project proposal Preparation, (ii) Supply Chain Management, (iii) Quality Control & (iv) Auto CAD (2d & 3D).

With an object in mind, BACI developed partnership agreement with renowned training institutions MAWTS, Montage, UCEP, BTBDC, AITEI, and developed own training Skill Development Institute (SDI) for imparting skill training program to cater job market demand of the construction sector. The first launching ceremony for SEIP project was inaugurated by the honorable Minster of Finance Mr. Abul Maal A Muhit MP at MAWTS with the representatives of BACI & senior GO. NGO & Donor agency officials.

Progress of programs since implementation

Enrolment/Training and job placement
Starting from the beginning April 2015- March 2016, BACI -SEIP project has enrolled 2753 of trainees, out of which 2426 were graduated and 1120 got gainful employment in different construction sector industry. At present 1023 trainees are taking skill training under five trade courses course.

Curriculum, Teaching and Training method followed in the Training Course
BACI follows the modular based curriculum and course module for these courses and the courses are tailor-made, job focused and aligned with the needs of construction industry. The duration of the course curriculum is 3 months (300Hrs). Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), compliance, productivity improvement, communication skills, and technique of team-
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Certification System
Certification is awarded to by BACI and Training Institute jointly based on the external assessment evaluation report conducted by the Industry Assessors which is accepted in the job market.

BACI' Skill Development Institute (SDI)
BACI established Skill Development Institute (SDI) in a rented building located at Mough Bazar, Dhaka and subsequently it will be transferred to its own building on the land at UTTRA allotted by the Ministry of Public Works, Govt. of Bangladesh and Training Centre will emerge as Centre of Excellence for the providing skills training in the construction sector of the country.
Officials hope to start operation of Dhaka metro rail project partially by end of 2019

Soil resistivity testing under way at the capitals Karwan Bazar and Farmgate, inset, for the construction of the metro rail, which is scheduled to start in early 2017. photo: star

With the soil testing almost done, officials of Dhaka metro rail project hope they can start operation of the dream project partially by the end of 2019.

They plan to launch the service initially on the 10km stretch between Uttara and Agargaon, part of the 20km line that goes as far as Motijheel.

Construction of viaduct and elevated stations along Uttara-Agargaon stretch, divided into two segments, is set to start by November next year. The contractors for the job have already been hired.

It will take until July 2017 for the same job on Agargaon-Motijheel stretch, which is likely to go in full operation by the end of 2020, said Mofazzel Hossain, director of Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project.

The consortium of consultants have already submitted the basic design and are now working on the details, he told the media at the project office in the capital yesterday.

The Tk 22,000 crore ($2.5 billion) ambitious project is aimed at easing traffic congestion in the capital city through an improved, faster, comfortable and time-bound public transportation service.

According to project director, a train with six air-conditioned spacious coaches will operate every four minute, enabling a commuter to travel from Uttara to Motijheel in just 38 minutes which now takes around two hours on a normal day.

A total of 24 such trains would carry 60,000 passengers every hour to both directions and drastically cut the number of private cars on the streets, Mofazzel continued.

The metro rail will have stations at 16 points of the city -- including at Uttara, Pallabi, Mirpur, Kazipara, Shewrapara, Agargaon, Rokeya Sarani, Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate, Sonargaon Hotel, Shahbagh, Doel Chattar, Topkhana Road and Motijheel.

The metro rail will have noise barriers and vibration-free tracks and thus be environment-friendly, he said.

The entire alignment would be divided into four segments and as many contractors would be hired for simultaneous construction, he went on.

The relocation of utility service lines would go on simultaneously as well, Mofazzel added.

Geo-technical examinations of soil at 120 points along the 20-km proposed alignment are done with the laboratory test results pending, said Nurul Islam, safeguard expert of the metro rail project.

The topographical, traffic and geotechnical surveys for the metro rail are also nearly done, he said.

Hideo Omori, team leader of consultants’ consortium, who worked in metro rail projects in Delhi and Jakarta, said: “I am making use of experience in building metro rails in this region and the progress of Dhaka metro rail so far is extremely good."

The first tender for pre-qualification to procure 24 locomotives, 144 coaches and equipment for the depot was floated early January.

Nippon Koei Limited of Japan leads the consortium of consultants that include Nippon Koei India Ltd, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd, Mott MacDonald Ltd India, Mott MacDonald Ltd UK and Development Design Consultants Ltd Bangladesh.

Japan will provide Tk 16,600 crore of the project’s total cost as soft loan while Bangladesh government will bear the rest.
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Unfinished Highways, a Hurdle to Bangladesh's Economic Dreams

Across the road from Dhaka airport, workers in bright yellow hardhats walk past rusting steel beams that show both the promise and risks facing Bangladesh's economy. The piles of metal are meant to be the building blocks of the country's biggest public-private venture -- a 20-kilometer (13-mile) elevated road that will allow cargo trucks to bypass the capital's crowded intersections. It will connect with a highway, now being widened to four lanes, to the main port of Chittagong. Plans are underway for another expressway running parallel that will slash the travel time to two hours from eight.

When completed, the three projects would allow companies to quickly ferry goods along a 250-kilometer route that carries 90 percent of Bangladesh's exports. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's looking to set up several of the 100 planned special economic zones along the roads, generating growth that would allow Bangladesh to move beyond making garments and triple incomes to more than $4,000 a year by 2021.

The rust, however, reveals the uncertainties. Work on the elevated highway, originally agreed to start in 2011, began only last August. The highway expansion has missed at least two completion deadlines and risks becoming obsolete soon after 2020 as traffic volumes rise. The parallel expressway has been at the planning stage since 2011.

"Without proper infrastructure to establish connectivity, the SEZs will not be attractive to investors," said Zahid Hussain, lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office. "It's like putting the cart before the horse."

Row Harder

With the global economy slowing, it's becoming more urgent for Bangladesh to pick up the pace. In cutting the benchmark interest rate to a four-year low, central bank Governor Atiur Rahman warned on Thursday that Bangladesh will have to "row harder" to achieve economic growth rates that have averaged over 6 percent since 2010.

Bangladesh's government wants overseas investment to rise 10-fold to about $10 billion over the next five years, and aims to double annual exports to $60 billion. The plan is meant to move Bangladesh beyond garments, which comprise 80 percent of overseas sales, and into more value-added industries such as food processing.

To do that, Hasina offered China, India and Japan land pockets and 10-year tax breaks to build special economic zones at 37 sites. This will be expanded to 100 by 2030.

PPP Pipeline

Some companies have jumped. China Harbour Engineering Co. will develop a 774-acre zone in Chittagong for Chinese investors, while China National Machinery Import & Export Corp. is in talks for another one nearby. India will provide $88 million for two zones, Paban Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, said in an Oct. 4 interview.

"These companies will just build the zones," Chowdhury said. The "real investments" will come from companies that set up shop there, he said.

Bangladesh has a pipeline of 45 PPP projects worth $15 billion spanning over four years. Yet finding investors has been difficult, in part due to financing. As a result, Hasina's administration has created a $250 million annual fund to subsidize promising projects, Syed Afsor H. Uddin, chief executive of the Public-Private Partnership Office, said in October.

"A number of things we looked at," Uddin said. "One
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was institutional reform, then it was regulatory reform, then capacity building, then it was development of a bankable pipeline of projects. And finally it was supporting the development of the financing ability."

Financing Hurdle
One way for Bangladesh to overcome the financing hurdle is to use its "very respectable" growth performance to lure foreign direct investment, said Ahsan H. Mansur, executive director of the Dhaka-based Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh. The government must then acquire land and build supporting infrastructure to connect it to the ports, Mansur said by e-mail.
The government needs to make it easier to do business and hasten the completion of key projects to attract investment, according to Hussain from the World Bank. He cited Mongla in southwestern Bangladesh as an example of an isolated sub-district that lacks connectivity.
Over the past decade Mongla port has lost half its market share, and the road-rail bridge across the river Padma that authorities say will boost business has been pushed back three years with cost overruns. The World Bank withdrew from the Padma project in 2012 amid corruption allegations, leaving the government to build with its own funds.
In Dhaka, land issues and financing costs led to the delays in starting construction on the Dhaka Elevated Expressway. So far only 7 percent of the work has been completed. Developer Italian-Thai Development Plc didn't respond to an e-mail seeking comment.

China to build deep-sea port for Bangladesh
Bangladesh has decided to ink a deal with China to build the Payra deep-sea port after it shelved the much-hyped Sonadia deep-sea port multi-billion project amid opposition from major countries, including India, over Chinese involvement.
The latest policy direction from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) would pacify China after they were left disgruntled when the government abruptly backtracked from signing an agreement in July, last year, on the Sonadia port, a senior official in the PMO said.
The shipping ministry has undertaken a move to amend the Pairea Seaport Authority Act, 2013, inserting new provisions in the renamed proposed Payra deep-sea port authority act, 2015, to facilitate building the proposed deep-sea port, according to a decision taken recently in the PMO.

The policy making meeting, presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, included the deep-sea port in the list of the government's fast track projects. The PMO asked the shipping ministry to go ahead and award the contract to a Chinese firm to construct the port, an official in the PMO said.
The shipping ministry is expected to select a Chinese company soon to award the contract to construct the multi-billion dollar infrastructure project of the country.
"We will soon select one Chinese company for Payra deep-sea port construction among four such state-owned Chinese firms who submitted their proposals," Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan told newsmen.
The construction work of the deep-sea port will start next year, the minister added.
A senior shipping ministry official said the proposed
deal to be signed with a Chinese state-owned firm under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) will outline funding options, feasibility study by the company itself and total cost and duration to complete the project.

In the second phase, final agreement will be signed specifying cost of fund and rate of interest for low-cost Chinese loans.

Sources at the PMO said since June, last year, the construction of deep-sea port faced uncertainty as major regional and global powers joined hands together to restrict China’s involvement with the project. The countries opposing the Chinese funded ‘strategic installment’ through the much-talked-about deep-sea port, feel threatened of Chinese dominance in the pan-pacific territory in terms of port-related investment, a Senior Secretary of the Bangladesh government, preferring anonymity, said.

The government officials confirmed that India, Japan and the US equally opposed the move of the government to go further with the Chinese proposal on constructing the port. The trio, however, have so far failed at proposing any alternative financing arrangement, it was learnt.

“Sonadia deep-sea port is no longer our next target as it involves huge time. We are going forward to construct Payra deep-sea port to become a regional business hub,” Shajahan said.

When asked, Shajahan rejected the notion of accommodating China with the new deep-sea port after the government had taken a U-turn from awarding contract to a Chinese company to build Sonadia deep-sea port.

“The perception is not at all true. We opted for Chinese company because they have enough experience on constructing such large infrastructure projects,” the minister added.

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**Rod Price**

A hike in scrap metal prices in local markets has pushed the prices of mild steel (MS) rod by 20 percent in a span of two months.

The price of 40-grade MS rod is now selling at Tk 47,000-49,000 a tonne against Tk 37,000-38,000 two months ago, while the 60-grade category has soared to Tk 52,000 from Tk 43,000-44,000.

“Shipbreakers now charge Tk 35,000 a tonne of scrap, but the rate was Tk 26,000 two months back,” said Muzanur Rahman, managing director of Rahim Steel Re-Rolling Mills.

The price of rod, an important construction material, is a concern for the people close to the urbanisation of the country, which has been experiencing economic growth of over 6 percent for the last four consecutive years.

The present stock of scrap in Chittagong is around nine lakh tonnes, according to a shipbreaker.

Shipbreakers blame the scarcity of oxygen for the surge in the price of scrap.

“Oxygen is an important ingredient for melting down the scrap. But recently we are facing its severe shortage,” said Kamal Uddin Ahmed, owner of Sea-Shore International, a leading shipbreaker.

Industry insiders say the ship breaking industry cannot meet over 25 percent of the 25-30 lakh tonnes domestic demand for steel and iron products a year. The 75 percent demand is met by the imports of scrap.

The rod price recorded a peak early last year when the international market price of scrap jumped to nearly $800 a tonne. At that time a tonne of 60-grade rod was charged up to Tk 70,000 and 40-grade Tk 65,000.

Bankers find no reason for the present price rise, as imported scrap now hovers around $300 a tonne.

“Probably, the scrap importers want to make up for the losses they faced last year,” said a top official of a private commercial bank.

Such a loss reached even around Tk 100 crore for some of the scrap importers in 2008 because of higher import cost and the sudden price-drop, locally and internationally.

Echoing bankers’ views, Aameir Al Hussain, director, Bangladesh Steel Re-Rolling Mills Ltd (BSRM), said, “Some importers are trying to average the price. They incurred a huge loss last year for the higher import cost.”
Rod prices to increase on new VAT law

Steelmakers yesterday warned of price hike of rod, a key construction material, because of the imposition of 15 percent VAT under a new law that is going to be effective from July. The value-added tax under the new law will also bloat the government's public works budget, they said.

The government is the main user of rod, accounting for 70 percent of their outputs. At present, the manufacturers pay Tk 825 as VAT for each tonne of rod based on a tariff value system. But once the VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012 comes into force the amount will multiply.

Framed at the prescription of the International Monetary Fund, the law, which will replace the present VAT Act 1991, stipulates a universal 15 percent VAT rate.

"The ongoing development activities by the government will seriously be affected if the 15 percent VAT is imposed on rod," said AbulKasemMojumder, secretary general of Bangladesh Auto Re-rolling and Steel Mills Association (BARSMA), at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

The event was co-organised by BARSMA, Bangladesh Re-rolling Mills Association, Bangladesh Steel Mill Owners Association, and Bangladesh Ship Breakers Association to urge the government to continue with the present tariff value or administered value of rod.

The industry operators said they can provide rod to final users at between Tk 45,000 and Tk 50,000 per tonne by paying VAT at Tk 825. But once the new law comes into effect, customers will have to pay Tk 57,500 for a tonne of rod, Mojumder said, adding that the amount of VAT would go up in case of a rise in prices of melting scrap and billet, the raw materials of rod, in the international market.

Bangladesh consumes 40 lakh tonnes of steel annually, with the demand rising 7-8 percent a year, according to industry insiders. The steel millers' warning comes after the National Board of Revenue in a paper to the high-ups of the government last month said the cost of government's priority programmes such as Padma bridge and metro rail will escalate once the new law takes effect.

"It will require re-fixation of project costs and increases in budget allocation," the paper said.

The steel industry operators yesterday urged the government to continue with the tariff value system when it comes to fixing VAT for rods in the forthcoming fiscal year.

"If the government remains stuck to its position and slap a 15 percent VAT, we will have no way but to take to the streets to realise our demand," said BARSMA Chairman Sheikh Masadul Alam Masud.
Success Factors for Construction Firms

Since the economy's slow improvement, the construction industry has seen growth as well. The issue, however, is the growth is mixed. Some companies are benefitting from the economic environment, while others are still being trampled by the lasting effects of the recession. Following is a summary of the 5 factors for successful construction firms

1. Operations Visibility

Visibility gives managers and executives a complete view into the daily processes and activities within their business. It allows these leaders to evaluate the progress of active projects. It also allows for the opportunity for them to make well-informed decisions, or address project issues early.

Threat: Silos

Departmental silos take place when one department does not want to share information with other departments within the company. How it hurts the business:

- Reduced efficiency
- Lack of collaboration
- Employee dissatisfaction/turndown

Remedy: Tear Down Silos

Open communication is critical. Ensure the entire team knows the objectives, risk, and expectations of a project.

Benefits:

- High morale
- Projects completed on time and under-budget
- Few unpleasant surprises

2. Embrace Technology

Construction spends the least on technology—only 1% of total revenue. With all the benefits of technology, why the hold-up?

Threat: All Levels of the Workplace are Reluctant

It's coming from both those at the top and the bottom of the pyramid. Execs view technology as an expense, rather than an investment. While initially, the company loses money, major benefits and cost-savings will be the result long-term. Additional, companies may perceive that they are technologically advanced because of their adoption of spreadsheets. In reality, this is a very simplistic approach to technological advancement. The data may be stored, but not yet converted into meaningful information. Older employees at all levels are slow to accept technology, because they trust the same processes they've used for years.

Remedy: Purposeful and Mobile Apps

Applications will not only store data, but communicate it in a meaningful way. Find an application that is made specifically for the construction industry. The benefit in this is that it asks and provides only relevant business information. Mobile apps are extremely helpful because they can be used on-site, and, interesting enough, they're appealing to the older generation. Many find it easier and simpler to use than a software program.

Benefits:

- Increased productivity and efficiency
- Greater control over projects
- Long-term cost-savings
3. Manage Complexity

Construction projects are growing increasingly complex. Some factors of a complex environment:

- Multiple subcontractors and locations
- Architects are designing smart structures, including components with which contractors have had minimal experience
- Unanticipated events- accidents, severe weather, shipping delays

Managing multiple tasks and responsibilities is not easy.

Threats: Generic Software and E-Discovery
Some executives are cutting corners when installing software. By selecting Enterprise Resource Planning software (ERP), companies are saving money, but the programs are generic and can be used for any industry. There are multiple issues with choosing incorrect software:

- Generic software can mean larger expenses to configure the software to meet industry demands.
- While software changes are made, decisions will need to be made using incomplete and inaccurate information.

E-Discovery is another potential, and costly, threat. If your business does wind up in court, your company may have to pay a lawyer or expert to sift through stored data relevant to the case.

Remedy: Communication and Tech

- Clear communication and active collaboration
- Accurate data entry as early as possible
- Tech with a simple, human interface
- Tech specific for the construction industry

Benefits:
- Effectively manage active projects
- Generate accurate estimates

4. Document Only What Matters

Although we want to document everything, it's not feasible. Data documented should accomplish two things:

1. Manage projects
2. Resolve disputes

Everything else is noise.

Threat: Data Collection On-Site

- Data gets stuck on-site if work flow isn't clear
- Inadequate training on collecting data
- Work-sites too busy to document consistently

Remedy: Accuracy, Structure, and Supervision
- Ensure the team understands the importance of accurate documentation
- Document every issue that can lead to litigation
- Automate documentation with mobile devices
- Active supervision

Benefits:
- More accurate documentation when recorded as it happens
- Executives receive necessary information to manage projects and minimize risk

5. Avoid Litigation

Litigation is very costly. It is not unheard of for a construction firm to face bankruptcy and fail because of a lawsuit. Some potential suits: mold, water damage, and defective workmanship.

Threat: Plenty of Litigation to Go Around
71% of large construction firms are spending over $1 million on litigation currently. Clearly, lawsuits are widespread in the industry.

Remedy: Documentation
If the court date comes, companies need to be prepared with relevant documents. Inadequate documentation is an easy way to lose in court. Keeping daily reports makes the firm look prepared and thorough. It shows that the company paid close attention to the project. Foremen need to execute regular spot checks noting defective materials and any disputes with subcontractors and suppliers. Photo evidence is also important to have.

Benefits:
- Documentation builds your defense, but avoiding all together avoids costly legal fees. With close monitoring of projects, potential legal issues can be avoided.

Construction Management Success at Your Fingertips

Visibility, communication and technology are clear themes in successful construction companies. Keep up-to-date, but keep in mind your company's needs when selecting technology. Accurately noting key information keeps the whole team on board and, with active communication, can boost morale. Adopting some of these practices can improve both your efficiency and bottom line.
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