

BANGLADESH-BHUTAN-INDIA-NEPAL MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY IN THE SUB-REGION (M-CONNECT)



Joining Dots • Connecting People • Shared Prosperity

Field Diary

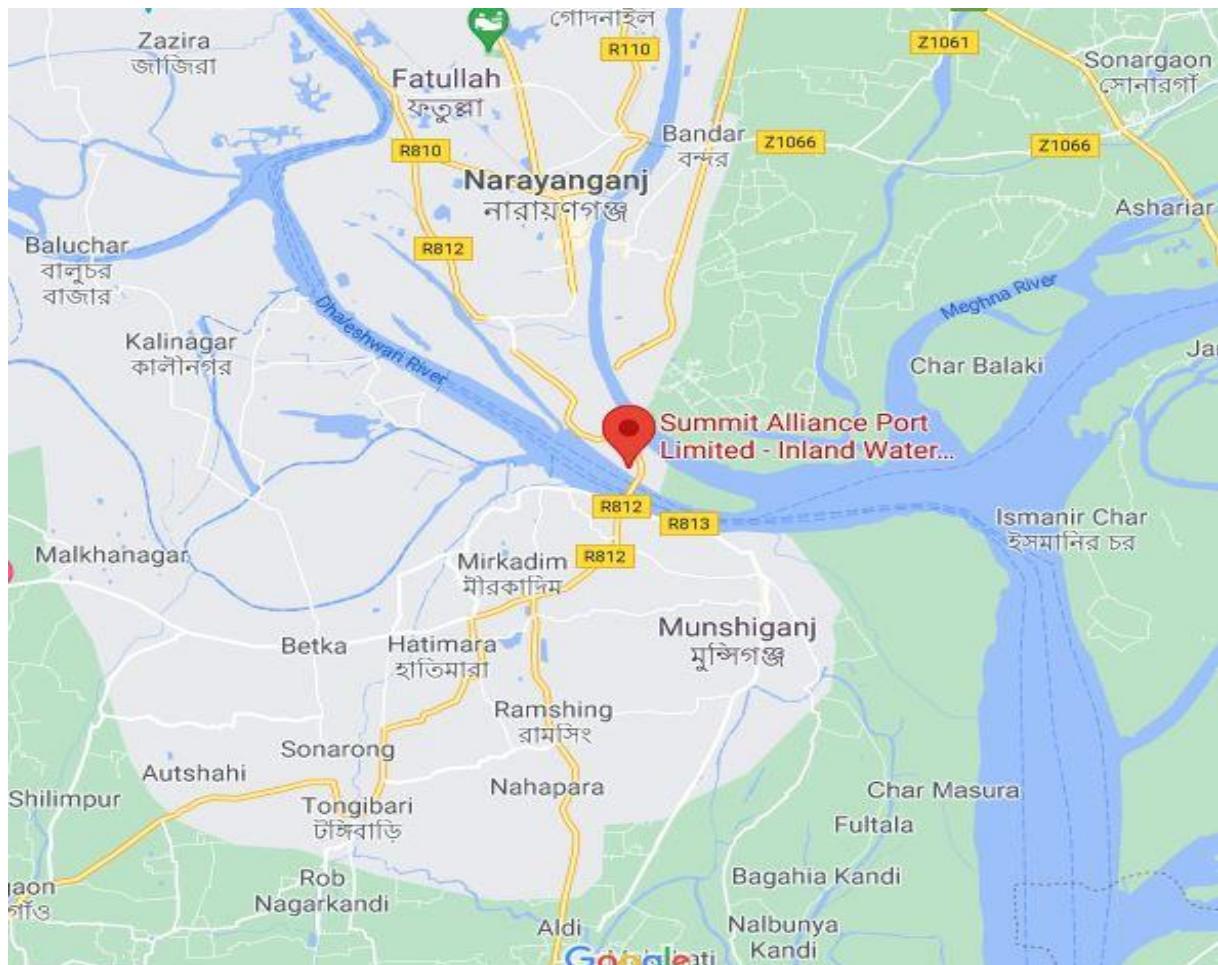
Muktarpur Port: First Private Inland Container Terminal in Bangladesh

Touseef Adnan

Research Officer, Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh

Unnayan Shamannay, in collaboration with CUTS International is conducting a study entitled 'Enabling a Political Economy Discourse for Multimodal Connectivity in the BBIN Sub-region (M-Connect)'. As part of the study, a minor field visit was undertaken at Inland Container Terminal in Muktarpur, run by Summit Alliance Port Limited (SAPL) and nearby areas.

The purpose was to visit Muktarpur River Port, a private river port that is an extended port of call between Bangladesh and India. SAPL is a Bangladeshi company that provides off-dock services. In addition to its facilities in the Chattogram Port, it also has a river terminal situated on the bank of Dhaleshwari River in Muktarpur in Munshiganj. SAPL also operates and manages three river terminals in India as well.



Map of SAPL Muktarpur River Port

Road to Muktarpur

Muktarpur can be reached from Dhaka through the Narayanganj-Munshiganj Highway. The port is situated at the starting point of Muktarpur Bridge. It does not take much time to reach Muktarpur by bus and then taking an auto as the roads are quite well carpeted.



View of Dholeswari River from Muktarpur Bridge

Visiting Summit Alliance Port Limited

The SAPL port appeared to be very organised and well maintained.



Automated Weighing Station

The port area comprises around 15.19 acres. The terminal's principal activities are Inland Container Depot (ICD), with facilities for empty container storage and container freight station having provisions for handling both import and export cargo.

At first, the port was licenced only for export goods in 2016 and started exporting garments goods to famous fashion

houses of the likes of Mark Spencer. In 2017, when the port got the licence to handle import cargo for the first time, only 21 categories of items were permitted. Later, 19 additional categories were added to the list of import items, which eventually led to importing all kinds of containerised goods.

Infrastructure and Human Resources

The team was informed that more than 80 people work in the port. The port has its own trained labourers, crane operators and drivers. Well facilitated cars, speed boats, container yard/storage space, wide approach road, export warehouse, import warehouse, 42 reefer plug points for perishable goods, 20000 sq. ft. Jetty having two Fixed Column Crane (FCC), approximately 300 truck parking on separate two acres of land, three reach stackers, lifting capacity- 40 tonnes each; four forklifts, seven prime movers, 17 trailers, an on-site workshop for equipment maintenance and inland container vessel (MV SAPL-1) are present in the port.



Automated Cranes at SAPL ICT

Moreover, International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS), armed security, CCTV coverage and 24/7 monitoring, Verified Gross Mass (VGM) measurement system, proper automatic gate access control system, generators with full facility power backup including crane operation, etc. are also available. The terminal is committed to environmental and social regulations.



Second floor of the three-storied warehouse



Reefer Yard of SAPL



SAPL ICT Jetty

Stakeholder Perspectives

The trade imbalance at the port is significant. The port officials highlighted that this difference between imports and exports is the biggest hindrance. They informed that as the export volume depends totally on the buyer, they need to be encouraged and incentivised to use the Muktarpur port frequently. The capacity of the port is not utilised even up to 50 percent, till the day.

Even though it took a long time to get approval from 37 public offices for the port, the current cooperation of the government agencies is satisfactory, but more can be achieved. Port officials feel that the government needs to promote this port with some necessary regulations for the shipping lines and incentives for using the port.

The stakeholders, including the locals, are satisfied with the port because it gives them more employment opportunities. The industry voice favours the Muktarpur port to maximise usage of the new Daudkandi-Sonamura route.

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