

For the Participants of

RIMA
Conference
2025

Field Visit

Payra Power Hub

8 - 9 October 2025 | Wednesday - Thursday
Payra Area, Kalapara, Patuakhali, Bangladesh

Organised by

CLEAN | Prantojon

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Where is Payra?

Payra is the name of the river, not an area. In Bengali, 'Payra' means 'pigeon'. It is a 90 km long and 1.2 km wide significant river in the mid-south region and a major route for the migration of Hilsha Fish (*Tenualosa ilisha*), which is the national fish of Bangladesh. The river originated from the Tetulia River, eventually flowing into the Bay of Bengal as the Burishwar River.

The Payra Power Hub is situated on the Ramnabad Channel, around 30 km from the Payra River. It is located in Dhankhali Union under Kalapara Upazila (sub-district) in Patuakhali District of Barishal Division. The area is located 280 km south of Dhaka City, 96 km south of Barishal Divisional City, and 42 km north of the Kuakata Sea Beach.

Why is the area important?

Payra Power Hub gained significance when the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) planned to install several large coal and LNG power plants, along with a deep-seaport, in the area. GOB had planned to install seven coal power plants with a capacity of 1,320 MW each (9,240 MW in total), three LNG Power Plants with a capacity of 1,200 MW each (3,600 MW in total), and some solar and wind power plants. A deep seaport and a naval base were also planned to be established in the same area.

Although several planned power plants were cancelled in June 2021, one 1320 MW Coal Power Plant is currently operational, one is ready to start commercial operation, and

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one is under construction. The Payra Seaport and naval base have been constructed and are currently in operation.

For these megaprojects, GOB has already acquired 6,335 acres of land from local farmers in the Champapur, Dhankhali, and Lalua Unions of Kalapara Upazila. Another 3,000 acres are planned to be acquired. Additionally, 37 acres of tidal canals were acquired by the infrastructure. As a result, the local people have lost their crops, fish resources, and other natural products, which are essential to their livelihoods.

Since the commercial operation of the Payra Coal Power Plant (Phase 1) began, fish production, especially Hilsha Fish, has decreased significantly due to the hot water and chemical discharge from the power plant.



Payra 1320 MW (BCPCL) Coal Power Plant (Phase 1)

The first power plant in the area is the Payra 1320 MW Coal Power Plant, which is sponsored by the Bangladesh-China Power Company Limited (BCPCL), a Joint-venture Company (JVC) of North-West Power Generation Company Limited (NWPGCL), a Bangladeshi State-owned Enterprise (SOE), and China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CMC), a Chinese SOE. The Export-Import Bank of China (CEXIM) financed USD 1,984 million as a long-term loan for the project, while the total budget was USD 2,470 million.

The Project took 982.77 acres of land from the local villagers of Dhankhali Union. It displaced 287 families, while only 120 families received compensation from the government, which is deemed inadequate by the affected people. As compensation, these families received small houses, which are insufficient for

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5-6 family members, and do not have any gardening or poultry rearing facilities, as required in the rural culture of Bangladesh.

The first unit of the power plant started commercial operation on 15 May 2020, and the second unit on 8 December 2020. Until June 2025, the power plant generated 29,563 GWh of electricity and emitted 26 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The power plant generates electricity at BDT 12.80 per kWh, which is 75% higher than the rooftop solar power. It also received BDT 15,878 crore (USD 1.5 billion) as the capacity payment over the last five years.

Payra 1320 MW (BCPCL) Coal Power Plant (Phase 2)

Before the completion of the first phase, GOB planned to install the second phase of the Payra 1320 MW Coal Power Plant in the same premises. CEXIM again came up with a loan of 1,547 million out of the total budget of 2,063.60 million. Construction work on the second phase began in April 2020. As of August 2025, the progress level is 22%, with the expected Commercial Operation Date (COD) scheduled for December 2030. Given that the progress rate has remained unchanged since March 2022, CEXIM might have ceased financing for the project.



Patuakhali 1320 MW (RNPL) Coal Power Plant

RPCL-Norinco Intl. Power Company Limited (RNPL) sponsors the Patuakhali 1320 MW Coal Power Plant. RNPL is a JVC between Bangladeshi SOE Rural Power Company Limited (RPCL) and Chinese SOE Norinco International Power Company Limited. CEXIM and Bank of China (BOC) financed USD 1,779 million out of the total budget of USD 2,540 million.

The company acquired 921.74 acres of land from the local farmers of Dhankhali, Londa and Nishanbaria villages under Dhankhali Union. More than 400 families have been displaced due to the project, but only 281 affected families received tiny houses as compensation. Many affected families are still demanding adequate compensation for their lands.

Construction work of the power plant commenced on 31 August 2019, and the project is now ready to begin commercial operation by September 2025.

Patuakhali 1320 MW (APSCL) Coal Power Plant

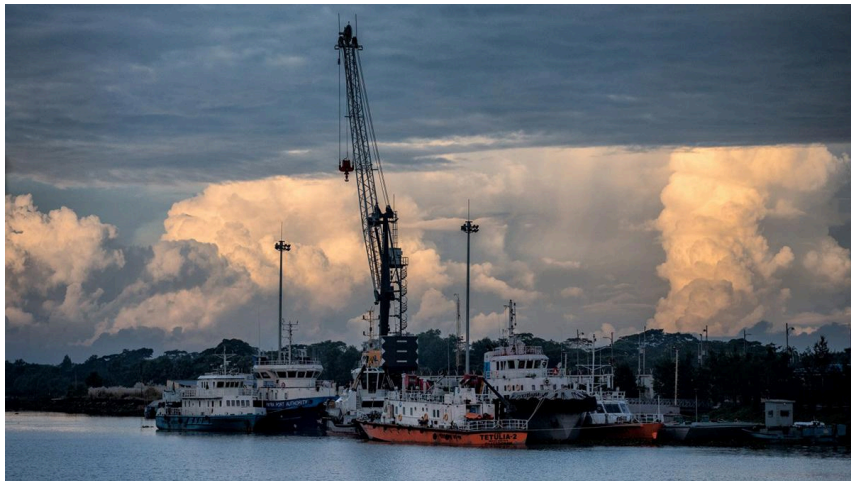
In July 2017, Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited (APSCL), a SOE of Bangladesh, signed an MOU with China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) to install two coal power plants with a combined capacity of 2640 MW in the same area. The power plant started acquiring 930.515 acres of land from the local farmers. However, there was no progress on financing the project.

In this limbo, GOB cancelled the approval of the coal power plant in June 2021. The local people demanded their land back as it was not used for its intended purpose. In contrast to the people's demand, APSCL proposed installing 3 x 1200 MW of LNG Power Plants and 120 MW of solar and wind power on the same land.

Payra 3 X 1200 MW LNG Power Plant

On the acquired land of NWPGL, the Government planned to install three LNG Power Plants with a combined capacity of 3,600 MW in partnership with Siemens, Germany. NWPGL signed an MOU with Siemens in November 2017 in the presence of the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Later, British Petroleum (BP) and China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CMC) also joined the project.

GOB planned a large LNG Terminal in the Rabnabad Channel to supply adequate fuel to the LNG Power Plant. However, according to a feasibility study, the channel is not fit for establishing large LNG terminals. After several delays, GOB cancelled the plan in August 2022.



Payra Seaport

In 2013, GOB planned to construct a deep seaport on the Ramnabad Channel in Kalapara Upazila, Patuakhali, with an initial budget of USD 15 billion. The British firm HR Wallingford & Consortium conducted the feasibility study, while the Belgian company Jan de Nul was appointed for the capital dredging and maintenance of the channel.

GOB acquired approximately 3,500 acres of land from Banatipara, Chandupara, Dhulashar, Itbaria, Lalua, Lepupara, Noakata, and Rajpara villages, out of a total of 6,500 acres in the plan. Out of the acquired land, only 600 acres have been used for the construction of Payra Seaport. Approximately 15,000 people are at risk of displacement, while over 1,750 families have already been displaced.

China Harbour Engineering Company Limited constructed the core infrastructure, while China State Construction Engineering

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Corporation built the housing, education, and health facilities. India Ports Global Limited constructed the one-km-long multipurpose terminal.

In April 2021, GOB downgraded Payra to a 'seaport' from 'deep seaport' following the feasibility study report on the Rabnabad Channel's draft. Several economists and hydrologists claim that the seaport is a 'White Elephant' for the Bangladesh economy now.

Currently, the seaport authority plans to install solar power on the unused land acquired for the port. However, local affected people are campaigning to regain their lands, as the project is currently in limbo.

About the Organisers



The Bangla word “Prantojon” means marginalised people: Prantojon, a non-profit voluntary organisation based in the Barishal Division. A group of young volunteers formed Prantojon in 2004, driven by a sense of social responsibility and a commitment to improving the quality of life for marginalised people. Prantojon works in the sectors of Agriculture, Climate Change, Energy Transition, Food Security and Water Governance. It has an office in Barishal city and Kalapara Upazila. Details about Prantojon: <https://prantojon.org/>



The Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) is a rights-based campaign organisation that works all over Bangladesh. Formed in 2010, CLEAN works in the sectors of agriculture and food security, Climate Justice, ecology and biodiversity, energy and power, and Financial Accountability. CLEAN serves as the secretariat of the Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development (BWGED) and the South Asia Just Transition Alliance (SAJTA). It has an office in Khulna and Dhaka. CLEAN Details: <https://www.cleanbd.org>

