Re-shipment facility to India: Benefits and problems

RANSSHIPMENT or transit is the movement of international trade of third countries through a second country. In the event of movement by sea, it is called transshipment and transit in the event of surface movement. For example, the international liner trade of Bangladesh, which is otherwise commonly known as container shipping, is transshipped via Singapore or other transshipment ports. It is either coming from a third country or going to a third country via Singapore.

Transit would have been the movement of goods by surface transport. For example, the trade of Nepal can move by using the Mongla port of Bangladesh. In which case Bangladesh would be required to provide transit facility to Nepal and Mongla would be called the transit port.

In essence both the terms of transshipment and transit imply the same and are features of international trade and commerce. Liner traffic or container shipping today use hub ports instead of the conven tional practice of calling at each port in order to make best use of resources and better utilization of larger container ships. Container ships have come a long way from 300-1200 TEUs to present 7000 TEUs plus. It is uneconomic and cost prohibitive for these new generation container ships to call at each port. It is being forecasted that in near future world container shipping will go through some dramatic changes and there will be few hub ports in the world e. g. two in the USA one in East Coast and the other in West Coast, one preferably Rotterdam in Europe, Hong Kong in the Far East, Singapore in South East Asia and one port in Japan. These ports will be major transshipment hubs and all other ports will be served from the nearest hub port.

Chittagong has never been a calling port for container ships, it is merely a feeder port and as such the international liner trade of Bangladesh is primarily served by Singapore and partly by Port Klang and Colombo. However, there are two land-

locked countries in SAARC namely Nepal and Bhutan and also a landlocked region of India namely the

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HE world of Islam is in turmoil

today. The events of 11th

September in New York have given

it a new jolt. The Muslim world was

far from stable even before that. It

had experienced many crises,

conflicts and revolution. The post

Islamic point of view it is the core

up in the countries of this region

either puppet rulers or support

who have no popular political base.

Irag. Iran and other countries in the

region have witnessed several

political developments are foisted

known as seven sisters who present a major potential for transit trade for Bangladesh by using Chittagong/Mongla ports provided, of course, respective governments reach a consensus on allowing the transit of international trade. The matter was highlighted earlier and I

"However, the point must be noted that it is only the movement of international trade that should be considered for the transit or transshipment facility through Bangladesh but is should not be confused with the term of corridor. Corridor, as the name signifies, implies the movement of goods of the same nation through a second country. It should be remembered transit is a feature of international trade while corridor is a bilateral arrangement."

"The economic perspective of transit trade is enormous if governments in all four countries of

Bangladesh, India, Nepal and

Bhutan realize the commercial

benefits that can be derived from

reaching a consensus to allow the

movement of goods in transit with-

out any barrier. The commercial

and transport costs by routing the

movement of goods to and from the

Seven Sisters via

Chittagong/Mongla that she pres-

ently incurs by using her own sea

also save cost and time in the move-

ment of their international trade by

Similarly, Nepal and Bhutan can

India will save the huge logistics

benefits will include

using Mongla port.

government has to look into various aspects including infrastructure, legal system, customs, banking, insurance etc as well as study the issues of liberalization and regulation of trade. Improvement of international transport and the development of multimodal transport also require a coordinated effort of the

and the transport providers. "Bangladesh is a developing economy and it is unlikely that we can make a major improvement overnight but at the same time we cannot stay outside the global trend in trade and transport. We cannot afford to ignore the demand of international trade and should look closely into implementing the multimodalism and earn our due share in not only our international trade but also carefully explore the benefits of transit trade.

With the above in place, we are now getting this new idea of re-

measures can be implemented for minimizing the scope of any illegal trade.

shipment. As a matter of fact, re-

shipment in itself is not a new con-

cept: many of the export-oriented

garment factories here in

Bangladesh are guite familiar with

the word re-shipment. It arises when

certain goods arrive Bangladesh

whether by error or for other rea-

sons and need to be returned to its

origin. The permission for re-

shipment is then needed to be

obtained and Bangladesh Bank

grants permission only after being

satisfied that no foreign exchange

was repatriated against the goods.

Usually the re-shipment of goods

should be and is allowed as long as

in UK is importing from Asia a certain commodity not for UK alone but also for whole Europe. So, he imports into UK and then distributes the same in Europe through the process of re-shipment

Example of Hong Kong has been cited which allows re-shipment of goods to and from China. But what is conveniently not mentioned that Hong Kong is not used for the movement of internal trade of China. China until recently did not have any suitable port of call for container ships and as such their international liner trade used to move via Hong Kong. Hong Kong continued and still continues to act as a transshipment/transit port for China's trade.

It is rather ambiguous to apply the term re-shipment for the internal trade movement of India through Bangladesh. Perhaps it is a smart way to divert the public resentment against allowing any corridor to India. The movement of internal

and criminals who may take advantage of the facility for their illegal trade in drugs, arms etc.

In reality, providing re-shipment facility in the absence of a proper policy and adequate security measures, is unlikely to yield the desired effect that the government looks forward to. The probability is that, then the re-shipment facility may have the following undesired

The huge gap in the balance of payment between the two countries will only get wider;

The additional revenue that the government projects for earning from the re-shipment may not

correspond to the real income, and The present level of revenue collected from goods imported from India may start to diminish -- a black market may flourish where traders will find goods cheaper than had it been imported legally upon payment of duties and taxes.

It appears that the government is firm on providing re-shipment (corridor) facility to the internal trade of India in which case the least the government should do is check whether effective

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Rules and legal frameworks need to be enacted to govern the liabilities for people providing the service of carriage of sealed containers with adequate penalties to discourage any form of wrongdoing

Government should check the pricing for transit or transshipment facility in other countries e. g. Singapore (for transshipment) and Europe (for providing overland facilities/transit to containers) and impose similar or comparable charges on the same using the overland transit facility of Bangladesh.

It appears that the government is firm on providing re-shipment (corridor) facility to the internal trade of India in which case the least the government should do is perhaps check whether above measures can be implemented for minimizing the scope of illegal trade.

Furthermore, on the other but relevant token, Bangladesh has always been very liberal in her attitude towards Indian trade and commerce by allowing unrestricted entry of Indian goods and manpower (a large number of Indian people are presently working in IT, health and other sectors) but the latter cannot be said to have reciprocated in the same manner. The latest Indian conservative and protective attitude is displayed in the imposition of anti-dumping duties on Bangladesh batteries imported into India. It is also said that the arrangement of transit for Nepalese international trade through Mongla port is frustrated by the Indian noncooperation. Re-shipment for the internal trade movement of India will undoubtedly be one of the biggest concessions ever granted by Bangladesh to Indian trade and commerce and so, the question can obviously be raised what conces sions will be reciprocated by our big neighbour. Perhaps it is the moment that Bangladesh obtains Indian concession for the trade movement of Nepal, Bhutan and perhaps their own seven eastern states through Mongla/Chittagong ports.



All health information to keep you up to date

For Your Eyes only

Are you at risk?

Tick the following boxes if you have these "risk" factors:

- clears with blinking? Is your eye red? Is there a discharge coming from Have you been in contact with
- Are your eyelids stuck together
- in the morning?
- Do you wear contact lenses?
- Do you suffer from allergies?
- $_{\chi}$ Has any foreign matter entered Do you have blurred vision that
- If you ticked two or more boxes, you may have conjunctivitis and should seek medical advice.

What is Conjunctivitis?

Conjunctivitis is the inflammation of the conjunctive, which is the skin covering the whites of your eyes and the lining of your eyelids. Conjunctivitis can be highly contagious in its early stages.

Sharing items that touch the eye, such as make-up or towels, can

spread conjunctivitis Washing you hands frequently and avoiding rubbing your eyes are good ways of reducing the risk of

spreading conjunctivitis. When it occurs, the blood vessels in the eve become congested giving the eye a pink-red appear-

Red eyes are the result of a wide range of eye problems, some are minor and others are more serious and can threaten your sight.

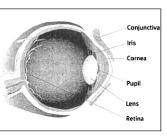
Symptoms of conjunctivitis The symptoms and signs may be in one eye or in both eyes. They include the following:

red eves a discharge which may be clear, or sticky and yellow

anyone with conjunctivitis?

itchy eyes blurred vision that clears with blinking

swelling of the evelids and the conjunctiva.



Next: Is snoring making you tired?

Bangladesh can earn a substanand not after it crosses the customs tial revenue by allowing the transit market thus depriving the governfacility to these countries. ment of the revenue that could be The forwarders in Bangladesh The term can also be used for the earned had the diverted goods been can also participate in the trade and trade when merchandise of one imported under the import policy increase the economic activities of country is exported to a third country

"Multimodalism has become synonymous with globalization each supplementing the other. In

it is not taken out of the customs bonded area e. g. Chittagong port by using a second country. It is a common phenomenon in Europe

that trading there is specialized and

not all trading houses trade in the

same commodity. For example, a

A new approach for Islamic world needed

trade of India is under no circumstance falls into the category of transit or transshipment. In all practicality, it will not be incorrect to say that a corridor has been allowed to India. The fact that now remains to be

seen is that how the government will protect the goods under reshipment from being smuggled into Bangladesh. It is learnt that the Ministry of Commerce is in the process to formulate certain rules and bonded warehouses will be built for goods under re-shipment. But question can obviously arise in respect of unscrupulous traders or transport operators that they will not divert a part of the cargo in the local and cleared upon payment of applicable duties, VAT and taxes.

The concern is not only the smuggling of goods but in the long run the facility provided in the name

Under the circumstances one has every reason to be skeptic on the realization of benefits that our policy makers think derivable from the re-shipment facility to Indian internal trade.

Even in the event of transshipment/transit trade, there has to be certain security measures in place including

Allowing the transship ment/transit to containerized traffic

The containers are by mandatory requirements in all countries are sealed at origin and can be broken only at destination.

The seal numbers must be noted at point of entry and re-checked at point of exit to see if it is in order. In the event the seal is broken, the container must be detained and criminal proceedings instituted against the people responsible for the transit of container from the point of entry and exit in Bangladesh. In most countries, containers found with broken seals

The times are changing fast and there is great deal of necessity for re-thinking the issues. Muslims have to work for their own political and social liberation through modern education, on one hand, and, ushering in democratic culture, on the other. It is not enough to say Islam stands for peace, one also has to promote peace in Muslim societies. The jihadi discourse will have to be countered by discourse of peace and democracy.

colonial phase in whole of Africa and Asia that way has not seen long lasting stability. There have been ings of the Qur'an but on medieval frequent changes of regimes and theological formulations and term it revolutions. Most of it has been due Islamisation of politics. Thus this to post-colonial problems, lack of legitimisation game by unpopular economic development and rulers has serious social and politiwidespread discontent. The Islamic cal repercussions of their own. world, particularly the West Asian These rulers then enforce mearegion, has been more conflict sures which look anti-modern, antiprone due to its sensitivity because secular and anti-women and bring upon harsh criticism on Islam. It is oil politics, which has caused

The media also has its own antimuch turmoil in this region and from Islamic prejudices, which make media comments on Islam even harsher. Instead of looking at things area of Islam. It is this core area of Islam, which has been much in in political and social perspective turmoil. The western powers prop every thing is blamed on Islam and its bigotry. Or madrasa system of education comes under attack. It is dictators, monarchs and shiekhs not madrasa system per se which is responsible for social bigotry. On the other hand, madrasas are themselves reflection of political revolutions or political turmoil. And it manoeuvrings by the undemocratic being the core area of Islam, the

The madrasas, which produced

Taliban were dominated by people on it. Islam, thus becomes the cause with political aspirations. In fact of dictatorships and it is argued that Islam does not admit of democracy. these madrasas were created for These monarchical or dictatorial producing students who would regimes often survive by enforcing wage jihad against Soviet occupamedieval theological formulations. tion in Afghanistan. These

which are based not on core teach- madrasas with iihadi-orientation were financed by CIA and Saudis to meet their political needs. Madrasas by themselves do not produce bigoted students. Madrasas are basically meant for religious education. Pakistani politicians, particularly Zia-ul-Haq, was instrumental in promoting Islamic orthodoxy for his own purposes. His entire Islamisation project was inspired by his political needs. He promoted Islamic orthodoxy and jihadi mentality in Pakistani army also. The ISI was nothing if not political instrument of military rulers. All these had no popular sanction of Pakistani people. There has been no truly democratic regime in Pakistan. During so called democratic spells in between military rules in Pakistan

> rather authoritarian democracy. The Taliban regime, which was ultra-orthodox regime in Afghanistan, was backed up by Pakistan. not because it was religiously needed, but because it was political necessity to perpetuate Pakistani hegemony in the region. And iihad has been nothing but legitimisation of political violence in the region.

it has always been a controlled or

financed extremist Wahabi groups in South Asia region, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight other political influences, particularly Soviet influence during the Soviet period and Iranian influence during the post-Soviet period. The Saudi rulers were shaken by the Islamic revolution in Iran and wanted to counter it by financing extremist Sunni outfits in the region. The Sipah-e-Sahabah and similar other groups depended for their finance, apart from internal sources (ISI or donations from people) on sources such as Saudi.

Also, the Pakistani politicians directly or indirectly incited feelings in Kashmir, not because they really wanted it liberated but it paid rich political dividends internally. And this also could be legitimised through the Islamic idiom of iihad. It does not mean there is no discontent among the Kashmiri people and their grievances are not to be redressed. It is a different issue altogether. The Kashmiri Islam, being sufistic Islam, has no place for iihadi mentality. Its outlook is sulh-ikul (peace with all). But jihadi outfits

by Jim Davis

It is also true that the Saudis have were created and financed to suit stani rulers. The jihadi idiom caught on easily among the educated unemployed youth that could let out their frustrations through armed

> It is also important to note that there is potential for violence in all societies, including industrially highly developed societies. In American societies too one finds great deal of internal violence as witnessed from time to time. As pointed out by Khaled Al-Maeena, editor-in-chief of Arab News, there are many instances of inhuman violence in the American society. He writes, 'Before advising Saudi Arabia on how to monitor its Islamic seminaries, the US should take stock of its own schools, a breeding ground for scandals.' He points out that Charles Whitman, the University student who climbed up the university tower in Texas in 1966 with an arsenal of weapons, and then killed 17 of his fellow students and teachers and followers of Charles Manson, who believed the latter was God and blindly obeyed his orders to go on killing spree, were not product of any Islamic

> madrasa Or violence in Palestine particularly by Hamas is not product of Islamic madrasa system. It is product of Israeli policies in Palestine. The media after every suicide bombing rushes to denounce Islamic militancy but hardly says a word about Israeli ruthlessness and overuse of violence against Palestinians in the name of its security. Some papers even go to the extent of saying that the state of Israel is surrounded by number of militant Arab states out to destroy it and it has to take steps to ensure its security. No one points out that Israel alone has capacity to destroy all those states put together and has

powerful backing of American arms. Having said all this it is necessary to urge upon the Muslims to reflect deeply about the state of affairs in Islamic world today. May be the world media over-projects its anti-Islamic biases. Also, it is true that instability in the region is more because of oil politics and western interest but Muslims themselves also cannot escape all responsibilities for promoting peace and development-oriented politics in Muslim

The times are changing fast and there is great deal of necessity for re-thinking the issues. The rulers have their own interests but the Muslims have to work for their own

political and social liberation through modern education, on one hand, and, ushering in democratic culture, on the other. It is not enough to say Islam stands for peace, one also has to promote peace in Muslim societies. The iihadi discourse will have to be countered by discourse of peace and democracy. Islam itself was a revolution against injustices and ignorance in the Arab society of the time. The Islamic revolution gave values of justice, peace, human dignity and wisdom.

It is thus duty of all Muslims today to create societies in keeping with these fundamental values of Islam and fight, through democratic struggles, for realising these values. The jihadi discourse must be replaced by democratic discourse. Violence will not solve any problems of modern society. Industrial and technological development can take place only through education and proper developmental perspective.

In critical periods the societies have thrown up leadership with future vision. Militancy and extremism must be completely shunned and Muslim youth must be inspired by these fundamental values for its struggles for better and more just societies. To raise cry for jihad is to play in the hands of vested interests that oppose any structural changes to perpetuate their own rule.

Persons like Osama bin Laden are not going to liberate Islamic countries. They will bring only more destruction and war. Frustration cannot be equated with change. What Osama and his supporters represent is anger and frustration. Jihad is not use of violence in the state of anger and frustration. Such violence is totally destructive not of one's enemy but of oneself. Real iihad will be against ignorance and vested interest using all available democratic space in one's society. Medieval theological idiom with an air of finality and dogmatism will not be an effective weapon. Such theological discourse will only breed stagnation.

The whole sprit of Qur'an is dynamic as pointed out by so many great Islamic thinkers like Jamaluddin Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Sir Syed and Muhammad Iqbal. They waged real jihad against stagnation, dogmatism, ignorance and superstition in the name of Islam. It is highly necessary to revive the spirit of these great Islamic thinkers and activists. Their jihad was real jihad. Their main weapons were knowledge, understanding and constant efforts to change. Iqbal represented this spirit in his much auoted verse which says, 'Firm conviction, constant efforts and overpowering universal love are the weapons of men in jihad of life.' This is a challenge for us all Muslims. We must turn into a great opportunity and change the image slam in the modern world.

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