

Fate of pvt port uncertain

NURUL ALAM

The need for any private port may not arise with the implementation of the Newmooring Container Terminal (NCT) at Chittagong port, sources said.

As a result, the government is unlikely to give permission for installation of any private container port here if the container handling efficiency of this premier port could be raised with the help of NCT to meet the growing demand, sources added.

The foundation stone of NCT was laid on October 17 by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia with a view to increasing the efficiency of this major seaport of the country to compete with the regional ports and to face the global challenges in trade.

The NCT is expected to be commissioned by 2002 and it is supposed to handle 5,00,000 containers annually, port sources said.

The NCT will be built at a cost of Tk 737 crore from the fund of Chittagong Port Authority.

This will be the second container terminal at Chittagong port. The first container terminal known as Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) was built at a cost of around Tk 500 crore in 1993.

The CCT was designed to handle 90,000 containers, but it was running over capacity while

Chittagong port last fiscal year handled 5,00,000 containers against the backdrop of growing number of containers.

Port officials hoped that the NCT if commissioned, would fetch additional revenue earning of Tk 200 crore per year.

The 1000 metre long berth of NCT will be able to handle five container ships with modern equipment.

Meanwhile, hopes ran high among the users and union leaders of Chittagong port as the NCT project was being implemented with the laying of foundation stone of the NCT.

Former CBA president of Chittagong port Mahfuzur Rahman Khan said "now we feel happy that the foundation stone of the NCT was laid though after a long time as we launched movement and enforced strike here on various occasions demanding implementation of this project and modernisation of Chittagong port".

"After installation of NCT, Chittagong port will have more handling capacity. So, we don't need SSA port or any other private port here", Khan said adding "if SSA is allowed to set up container port at the estuary of Kamaphuli river, Chittagong port will be destroyed".

The handling capacity of Chittagong port would be doubled after construction of the NCT, he

added.

"What we need now, is only to procure modern equipment including gantry cranes for smooth handling of container cargo. We will not be required to depend on any foreign company's private port," Khan said.

Chairman of the Port Users Forum (PUF) and Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) Farid Ahmed Chowdhury said, "our NCT and procurement of gantry cranes are enough to cope with the growing pressure of container cargo at Chittagong port".

"We don't want SSA port or any other private port here. If the US company SSA is allowed to install port at our river mouth it will be a threat not only to Chittagong port, but for the whole country," Farid said. "If we can develop our existing port then why should we go for allowing a foreign company to set up a private port here, he added. The location selected for SSA is also risky and not feasible for construction of a port".

Chairman of Chittagong port Authority (CPA), Commodore (retd) Julfikar Ali while talking to this correspondent said, "after commissioning of the NCT and procurement of modern equipment like gantry cranes the efficiency of Chittagong port will increase much more. We will be able to meet the demand in container handling till the year 2015

very comfortably by handling over 12 lakh containers annually," he added.

"Besides, we have a plan to go for more expansion works at Chittagong port," Julfikar said. Some of the existing jetties also will be turned into container yards gradually to accommodate more container cargo at Chittagong port.

He said that bidding process for procuring gantry cranes for the existing CCT was already completed.

"If we can bring the gantry cranes under operation, the container handling will definitely be faster," the chairman said.

Chittagong port was set up in 1887 with a capacity of handling 6 million metric tons of bulk cargo annually only. It was not designed for handling container cargo.

Now it is handling more than 12 million metric tons of cargo annually. As the new trend of global containerisation started, Chittagong faced a challenge to cope with the situation.

Then it was forced to set up the CCT, the first terminal for handling the containers.

Port sources said container cargo started arriving at Chittagong port from 1977 and then it made a leap with an average increase of 20 percent per year.



Two ships waiting at container terminal at Chittagong port.

PHOTO: STAR



Unemployed garment workers crowd in front of a foreign garment factory located at the Chittagong Export Processing Zone Area to seek employment.

PHOTO: STAR

The Super Sportsmen from Chittagong

MOHIT UL ALAM

The tradition Iqbal Khan started was carried on by his younger brothers, one of whom was Akram Khan.

Following the family gene, Akram was a lovely chubby fellow in his childhood days. He would follow his elder brothers to the outfield of Neaz Stadium with bat and ball. When Akram was shaping up as a promising player, we had already left the field and started our professional careers. It was Pahari (Abul Maqsood, Abul Fazal's youngest son, now a VP of AB Bank, Dilkusha) who first told me about Akram. On a week holiday, we gathered at Pahari's house, that is, Shahiya Niketan, and returned to our old habit of visiting the Neaz Stadium as a group. A league match was going on and Akram was playing for one of the teams. I was surprised to see that the lovely young chubby boy of yesterday had grown into a bulky young man and was sending the ball all around the park. Pahari told me that his extra fat owed to their habitual family diet, which was dominated by parata and fried beef. Watching him that day, we became convinced that for Akram to get a call for the national side was only a matter of time.

The call came sooner than later, and Akram established himself as an anchor batsman for the national team. He was playing superb cricket, and the captaincy came in his way, and then came the I.C.C. knockout championship at Kuala

Lumpur in 1997.

What happened in Kuala Lumpur is now a part of the glorious history of Bangladesh cricket, and in our exuberance to give credit to the team in general, we tend to forget to take note of the particular contribution each player of the team had made. For example, Pilot's hit of six in the final match against Kenya, which later on became a permanent image for BTV sports news, did bring the victory for Bangladesh. But before that, the innings that was played by Akram against Holland was the phoenix-innings that retrieved Bangladesh's hopes from the ashes of ruin, and stopped a revisit of the ghost of the failure in I.C.C. Kenya trophy of 1994.

Akram's score was nothing, a paltry 68, but 5 batsmen had already made their way back to the dressing room before the score reached 30, and the pitch was heavily rain-soaked, and the ball was turning unpredictably. Akram stood alone, took the match to the Dutch, and single-handedly carried Bangladesh to the final. If it didn't happen, where would the fate of Bangladesh cricket be in very easy to guess! That's how Akram should be assessed a great player.

When he returned home from that tour, I went to his house for an interview for *Toitomboor*, a national juvenile magazine. He was wearing shorts and taking his breakfast, and

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to me he still looked that chubby young boy who carried the cricket gear to the field toeing behind him in good stead many a time. Akram is famously polite and soft-spoken, and during that interview he was so profusely praising Gordon Greenidge that I realised that Akram had pursued his soul to Greenidge. He also praised Mohinder Amarnath, the previous coach, for teaching them the importance of physical fitness in sports.

Neither Akram nor Nannu should feel bad about the fact that they're no longer in the Bangladesh team, as they've already carved an important niche in this country's cricket history. Nannu, that is, Minhazul Abedin, came to cricket a few years earlier than Akram did. He is the youngest son of martyr Shamsul Abedin who used to play cricket for a national bank in Pakistan time. We saw him playing at Neaz Stadium, opening for his team. He was an attractive stroke player, and loved to play shots. Nannu, probably resembles his father more closely both in looks and playing style than does his elder brother, Nobel, also an ex-national player. Shamsul Abedin is the eldest son of the great Junu Mesh (Jainal Abedin Chowdhury) whose ancient house at Love Lane has turned itself into a colony, known as Abedin Colony.

On a fateful night in 1971, Shamsul Abedin was picked by the Punjabi soldiers from his father's house, and was killed. It fell to his young wife to raise the two young

boys, Nobel and Nannu mere toddlers in the fashion of their illustrious father. So far as my knowledge goes, Nannu probably had spent some time in England playing cricket, a training phase that stood him in good stead many a time.

There was some kind of fiasco in the meeting of the national cricket selection board, and Nannu was ominously dropped from the side that would soon leave to play the World Cup '99 in England. It was not Nannu's form that was in question, but some kind of mysterious political overture that forced the axe on the player. However, good sense finally prevailed, Nannu was also sent with the team, and the rest is history.

In a very inclement weather, the match against Scotland was almost turning into a nightmare for Bangladesh. But only Nannu stuck to his guns, while others fell like ninneps. It was the innings of his life, Bangladesh won, and he became the man of the match. One of the commentators expressed his surprise to know that the player was initially not chosen for the national side.

With Nannu and Akram retired, Chittagong has now no player to represent in the national side. Chittagong cricket is in a shambles, and the management of cricket and football must have fallen into very inept hands.

Ballast water - menace to world's oceans

CAPTAIN HABIBUR RAHMAN

The world's oceans are under threat from over fishing and from physical destruction. Discharges of oil, noxious liquid substances, sewage, garbage from ships and shore are other major threats to oceans. As if this is not enough, they are also under threat from alien invaders the aquatic organism and pathogens transported beyond their natural range and dispersed across the globe by the shipping.

The Global Task Force was convened by IMO in alliance with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Task Force launched a concerted response to this severe environmental problem. The new initiative is the Global Ballast Water Management Programme, or Globallast.

Over 80 per cent of the world's commodities are carried by ships alone and to keep the ship balanced and stable it transfers around 10 billion tonnes of ballast water each year. For safer shipping ballast is essential but problem arises when it contains marine life and poses a serious ecological, economic and health threat. There are thousands of species that may be carried in ship's ballast, which includes bacteria, cysts, and a larvae of various species.

Initiative to overcome the problem: During the Task Force meeting in London in July 2000, international environmental group Friends of the Earth described the Globallast

programme as "the most exciting environmental project in the world today".

IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) is working on developing mandatory regulations to address the problem of the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water.

The MEPC has continued to give priority to the development of a global ballast water management regime. In order to speed up the work, the draft text of a new mandatory instrument will be further developed during the inter-sessional meeting of the committee's 48th session (MEPC 48, October 7-11, 2002).

Current options for preventing the spread of harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water include exchanging the ballast water in deep ocean, where there is less marine life and where organisms are less likely to survive. Other options include various treatments of the ballast water en route to kill the living organisms these include filtration, chemical, and radiation treatments.

At the international level, it is likely that the new IMO Ballast Water Convention will be adopted in 2003. This will hopefully bring with it global standards and procedures for the evaluation, approval and adoption of new treatment technologies.

Ten of the Most Unwanted: Marine plants, animals and microbes are being carried around the world attached to the hulls of

ships and ships ballast water. When discharged into new environments, they may become invaders and seriously disrupt the native ecology and economy. Introduced pathogens may cause diseases and death in humans.

Cholera: Native to: Various strains with broad ranges. Introduced to: South America, Gulf of Mexico and other areas. Impacts: Some Cholera epidemics appear to be directly associated with ballast water. One example is an epidemic that began simultaneously at three separate ports in Peru in 1991, sweeping across South America, affecting more than a million people and killing more than ten thousand by 1994. This strain had previously been reported only in Bangladesh.

Cladoceran Water Flea: Native to: Black and Caspian seas. Introduced to: Baltic Sea. Impacts: Reproduces to form very large populations that dominate the zooplankton community and clog fishing nets and trawls, with associated economic impacts.

Mitten Crab: Native to: Northern Asia. Introduced to: Western Europe, Baltic Sea and West Coast North America. Impacts: Undergoes mass migrations for reproductive purpose. Burrows into river banks and dykes causing erosion and siltation. Preys on native fish and invertebrate species, causing local extinction during population outbreaks; Interferes with fishing activities.

Toxic Algae

(Red/Brown/Green Tides):

Native to: Various species broad ranges. Introduced to: Several species have been transferred to new areas in ships' ballast water. Impacts: May form harmful Algae blooms. Depending on the species, can cause massive deaths of marine life through oxygen depletion, release of toxins and/or mucus. Can foul beaches and impact on tourism and recreation. Some species may contaminate filter-feeding shellfish and cause fisheries to be closed. Consumption of contaminated shellfish by humans may cause severe illness and death.

Round Goby: Native to: Black, Azov and Caspian Seas. Introduced to: Baltic Sea and North America. Impacts: Highly adaptable and invasive. Increases in numbers and spreads quickly. Completes for food and habitat with native fishes including commercially important species, and preys on their eggs and young. Spawns multiple times per season and survives in poor water quality.

North American Comb Jelly: Native to: Eastern Seaboard of the Americas. Introduced to: Black, Azov and Caspian Seas. Impacts: Reproduces rapidly (self-fertilising hermaphrodite) under favourable conditions. Feeds excessively on zooplankton. Depletes zooplankton stocks; altering food web and ecosystem function. Contributed significantly to collapse of Black and Azov sea fisheries in 1990s, with massive economic and social impact. Now threatens similar impact in Caspian

Sea.

North Pacific Seastar: Native to: Northern Pacific Introduced to: Southern Australia.

Impacts: Reproduces in large numbers, reaching 'plague' proportions rapidly in invaded environments. Feeds on shellfish, including commercially valuable scallop, oyster and clam species.

Zebra Mussel: Native to: Eastern Europe (Black Sea). Introduced to: Western and northern Europe, including Ireland and Baltic Sea, eastern half of North America. Impacts: Fouls all available hard surfaces in mass numbers, displaces native aquatic life, alters habitat, ecosystem and food web, causes severe fouling problems on infrastructure and vessels, blocks water intake pipes, sluices and irrigation ditches. Economic costs to USA alone of around US\$ 750 million to \$ 1 billion between 1989

Ballast Water Stowaways in sequences:



practical. : Carry and implement a ship-board ballast water management plan.

: Maintain ballast water record book and submit reporting forms to port state authorities.

: Comply with port state legislation.

Some Port State Measures: : Designate a lead agency, form a national task force.

: Conduct awareness campaigns.

: Request arriving ships to submit reporting forms and establish a national information system.

: Carry out risk assessments for each port.

: Conduct biological surveys/monitoring in ports and alert shipping to outbreaks of harmful species.

: Provide shore-based ballast water treatment facilities where practical and cost effective.