

# BUSINESS

## Ctg port efficiency in spotlight

The Daily Star organises roundtable in association with CCCI

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Analysts yesterday stressed quick implementation of ongoing development projects to make Chittagong port an efficient and capable regional hub.

They also emphasised the need to expand the port's width, set up a deep-sea port and establish more inland container depots, taking the growth of trade and commerce into account.

A corruption-free management and better transport facilities are necessary for the port's growth, they said.

The analysts were speaking at a roundtable on "growth prospect of Chittagong port as a regional hub" at the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI).

The Daily Star in association with the chamber organised the roundtable, moderated by the newspaper's Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam. CCCI President Morshed Murad Ibrahim made the welcome address.

Port users, former and incumbent officials of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), business leaders, politicians and academicians also spoke.

Pointing to several problems, the port users said the country's premier seaport is still incapable of fulfilling the demands of local users.

Around 43 percent of space



Speakers are seen at a roundtable on Chittagong port, organised by The Daily Star in association with Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the port city yesterday.

remains unused in the port, which could be made a regional hub by addressing the manpower and equipment shortages, the port officials said.

The CCCI president emphasised increasing the capacity of the port as around 90 percent of the country's imports and exports are done through it.

No steps were taken to turn the port into a world-class one although the port has huge prospects of becoming a regional

centre with its geographic location, he said, adding that the neighbouring countries are also showing keen interest to use it.

Former Chittagong City Corporation mayor and Awami League city unit President ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury said necessary infrastructure development and expansion of the port could not be done as most of the income of the port has so far been used for other purposes.

He proposed setting up a harbour on the 25-mile coastal areas stretching from the port to Sitakunda.

Mahfuz Anam urged the government to implement the development projects fast to increase the efficiency of the port to turn it into a regional hub.

He proposed that a committee comprising port users identify the issues related to the port's development and problems.

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## Govt moves to ensure safety of sea fish catch

SOHEL PARVEZ

The government has cut sailing days for ice-dependent wooden trawlers by half from previous 15 days per trip to ensure quality of fish caught from the Bay of Bengal.

The decision drew mixed reactions from the stakeholders.

The owners of trawlers, having built-in freezers, welcomed the move. They said the decision will broaden scope for marine fish exports, as the quality of fish will be better due to the return of the trawlers within seven days.

But the owners of wooden trawlers, which depend on ice to freeze netted fish during sea trips, opposed it arguing that the cut in the fishing days will make their sails economically unviable.

"We welcome the decision. The decision will help keep fish in a better condition compared to the past," said MA Rouf Chowdhury, chairman of Bangladesh Marine Fisheries Association (BMFA), a body of owners of officially approved industrial trawlers.

He said the quality of fishes used to deteriorate earlier, as the wooden trawlers stayed up to 15 days in every voyage. Officials said the government moved to cut the marine fishing time from 15 days to 7 now, considering the food safety aspects, as the wooden trawlers do not have cold storage and operators of these trawlers carry ice to freeze fish for up to 15 days.

Insiders said a long stay at sea affects the quality of the fish caught due to attacks of various types of bacteria.

The decision comes at a time when 44,000 fishing boats and 174 trawlers skim in the Bay of Bengal with sea-floor-scraping

nets that scoop up everything on the way, causing over-fishing by about 50 percent.

The fisheries and livestock ministry issued the directive on February 19. It, however, said the decision will not be applicable to traditional local fishing boats.

The government takes the initiative as curbing of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing has become important to ensure wider access of marine fish to the European markets.

Of the 174, more than 50 trawlers, made of wood, do not have cold storage. Some 34 of these wooden trawlers are engaged in trawl fishing based on a court instruction.

"We have already informed the owners of non-freezer wooden trawlers of the decision and asked them to seek sailing permission for seven days," said Md Nasiruddin Humayun, director of Marine Fisheries Office, Chittagong.

Such trawler owners also demonstrated in front of the office of Marine Fisheries Department in the port city last week.

Md Jane Alam, president of Marine White Fish Trawler Owners' Association, said the decision of awarding a seven-day sailing permission in each voyage will make their fishing economically unviable.

"Our fishing time will decline due to the decision," he said, adding that a trawler needs two-three days to reach and return from the deep sea. It also has to spend time to search fishing ground.

"We have to spend Tk 9-10 lakh each trip for a trawler. If we get one or two days for fishing, it will not be viable for us," he said

He claimed the fish these trawlers catch do not affect quality, as these are not exported rather consumed at domestic markets.

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**দি মেটাল (প্রাঃ) লিমিটেড**

**টেলি বিশ্বকাপ অফার**

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### Roadmap for green banking

Bangladesh Bank yesterday rolled out a guideline for commercial banks to adopt a comprehensive green banking policy by December 2013. The purpose of the latest move is to make banking practices more responsible to social and environmental causes. In its policy guideline for green banking, the central bank said eco-friendly business activities and energy efficient industries should get preference in financing by the



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