

High hopes for Ctg port

The chairman of Chittagong Port Authority pledges to turn the port into an important link in regional business



Nizamuddin Ahmed

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

THE Chittagong Port Authority chairman vows to upgrade the country's premier port to a modern, world-standard port which can be used as an important transit point in regional business.

Rear Admiral Nizamuddin Ahmed emphasised improving the port's efficiency and capacity by installing modern systems, improving management and providing better services to users.

The ongoing development projects must be completed in time and necessary steps would be taken to expedite the projects, he said, in a recent interview with The Daily Star.

Ahmed hoped the port's productivity would improve with proper implementation of the recently introduced computerised container terminal management system (CTMS).

CTMS is playing a vital role in streamlining container handling at the port, but it is still in early stages, he said.

"If the initial problems could be rectified, users will experience the full benefits of CTMS within the shortest possible time," he added.

Ahmed said he wants to sit with all stakeholders separately to find out the problems they face in ser-

vices at the port.

"I asked them to identify the problems and submit proposals for port development," said Ahmed who believes in solving problems through building personal relations with all users.

Rail and river transport systems must be improved for fast transport of goods from the port to Dhaka and elsewhere in the country, he said.

Lighter vessels travelling from the port to Dhaka through the Sandwip Channel have to wait for around six hours for a high tide near the Ramgati point, said the chairman. The regular dredging of rivers will quicken inland vessel movement; and better rail and river transports will cut pressure on the roads, Ahmed added.

The installation of the vessel traffic management information system (VTMIS) is important and necessary for security at the port.

The system will provide surveillance for vessels in the port's territory, including an area of around 20 nautical miles from the third Karnaphuli Bridge on the Kanraphuli River towards the bay. Once the system is installed, all vessel movement would be under the control of the port authority and in case of any incident, coast guards would be able to intercept within half an hour.

In a press briefing yesterday on the occasion of the port's 125th founding anniversary, Ahmed said the radiation detection equipment have been set up at the port in cooperation with Megaport Initiative of United States of America to prevent nuclear and radio active materials entering through the import or export containers.

CPA deposited Tk 50 crore in grants and Tk 330 crore in taxes to the state coffers, he said.

Citing some improvement in port activities, Ahmed claimed the average waiting time of a vessel at the outer anchorage came down to 0.41 days this year, which was 1.62 days last year.

"If a vessel has to wait for an additional day with goods, it has to bear an additional cost of around Tk 8 lakh to Tk 12 lakh. The cost of import and export through Chittagong port has come down remarkably."

The average growth of import and export through the port is now 12 percent to 14 percent. The port's growth should be maintained continuously for the sake of the country and there is no way of sitting idle, Ahmed added.



NASIR ALI MAMUN

Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus poses with his global peers Shirin Ebadi, Jody Williams, FW de Klerk, Lech Walesa, Bill Clinton and actor Sean Penn for a family photograph at the two-day 12th Nobel Peace Laureates Summit that started yesterday in Chicago, USA.

Regulator moves to cut off-net mobile call rates

ABDULLAH MAMUN

The telecom regulator has taken initiative to reduce off-net call (from one operator to another) charges for mobile phone users, said officials.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the regulator, has already sent a proposal in this regard to the telecom ministry for approval.

BTRC Chairman Zia Ahmed said, currently a mobile operator charges as low as Tk 0.65/minute for calls to other operators (off net), which will be brought down to Tk 0.50 under the

new move.

The minimum and maximum on-net call charges -- Tk 0.25 and Tk 2 -- and the maximum off-net rate -- Tk 2 -- will remain unchanged.

The regulator will implement the new call charge as soon as the ministry gives the go-ahead, said Ahmed.

The telecom regulator also proposed a cut in SMS charges for the operators, said another official of the BTRC.

He said currently an operator charges Tk 0.20 for receiving SMS from other operators. The regulator has proposed bringing down the rate at Tk 0.10.

This SMS (short message system) rate is applicable for the operators only and they decide on the charges for the subscribers on the basis of this rate.

The official said the mobile operators now offer one minute pulse, and so customers pay for every minute no matter whether they talk for 20 seconds or 70 seconds. If a person talks for 70 seconds, he pays for 120 seconds or 2 minutes.

The regulator has been trying to introduce a 10-second pulse for long but could not do so due to pressures from the operators, said the BTRC official.

READ MORE ON B3

Telenor may quit India after spectrum fee hike



AFP

Managing Director of Indian cellular network operator Uninor Sigve Brekke (C) waves a flag as he dances with employees after addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on April 21. Uninor is owned by a combination of Norwegian mobile services provider Telenor group and India's second largest diversified real estate major Unitech. Telenor holds a 67.25 percent majority stake in the company.

REUTERS, Oslo

Telenor will likely quit India rather than pay a much higher price for spectrum, analysts said, with the Norwegian telecoms group seen benefiting from any scaling back of its presence in a low-margin market needing a big investment.

The minimum price for an auction of 2G spectrum, announced on Monday, could push Telenor's prospective costs well beyond its limit, leaving an exit as the only viable choice, analysts said on Tuesday.

"It is now highly unlikely Telenor will bid for a nationwide licence (in India), in our view, with the most likely course of action a significant scale-back or a complete exit, both of which would be positive for valuation," UBS analysts said in a note to clients.

On Monday, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

proposed a near-tenfold increase in the price of 2G spectrum.

Players in India's telecoms market, the world's second-biggest by users with over 900 million subscribers, have been battered by ferocious competition and a scandal over the below-market price sale of lucrative mobile permits in 2008.

The Supreme Court has ordered 122 permits granted to eight operators in a 2008 sale be revoked in June, and asked the government to redistribute spectrum through an open bidding process.

Telenor, which has over 30 million subscriptions in India among 140 million worldwide, has committed to invest a total of \$3 billion in Asia's third-largest economy and with two thirds of that already spent the raised fee would push it above the cap, USB said.

Nordea analysts said: "An exit from India would raise 2012 EBITDA and EPS by 6 percent and 20 percent respectively. The risk to

Telenor would also be reduced".

Based on forecast 2013 earnings, Telenor shares trade 15 percent below peers, they said.

Telenor shares were up 1.1 percent at 1030 GMT, in line with a European telecoms index.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court of India asked the government to conduct the new 2G auction by August 31, a delay of several months from an original schedule, giving telecoms firms more time to prepare and raising the prospect a compromise may be struck.

Telenor, which welcomed the delay, said the price proposal was a "major negative" for the entire sector.

Citi said India remained a source of major uncertainty and cautioned against jumping on the stock.

"We remain concerned that the market is assuming an exit from India, while this is not assured. The recommendations do increase the probability of an exit, in our view," Citi said.



Mutual Trust Bank Limited is a MTB Financial Services Group company headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The bank has been in operation for the last 13 years and owns three fully owned subsidiaries - MTB Securities Limited, MTB Capital Limited and MTB Exchange (UK) Limited. It operates a network of 76 branches and employs around 1,300 people with an admired corporate governance standard and unique corporate culture, based on a home-grown philosophy known as **MTB3V!**

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- Maintaining close ties with the central bank and other regulatory authorities, and working as an intermediary for the bank to meet the reporting requirements of the regulators
- Preparing periodic papers on issues like the financial health of the bank, risk profile of the bank for the CEO and the Board of Directors
- Overall monitoring of MTB Audit and Inspection Unit, MTB Compliance and Monitoring Department

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