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FIRST PAGE Exporters concerned at delay in cargo handling at port

FE Report

The country's exporters have expressed deep concern over the inordinate delay in cargo handling at the Chittagong sea port that costs the exporters a great amount of time and money.

Since the cargo handling authority was changed on May 10, 2010 the time consumed in cargo movements increased dramatically, exporters complained adding the authority has been taking on an average 10 days to unload imported goods for the garments industry which usually should not take more than three days.

Besides, container pilferage within the secured zone, shortage of handling equipment and unskilled or low-skilled port handlers are increasing vessels' turn-around time, costing about Tk 15000 extra-charge in every trip.

In search of an effective solution for this situation, garment makers' association BGMEA organised an emergency meeting with all stakeholders at the association's regional office.

Chairing the meeting, BGMEA's First Vice-President Nasir Uddin Chowdhury said the present awful cargo handling scenario is ruining the port's reputation. Holding Chittagong Port Authority responsible for this ordeal, he criticised the management that had taken over the cargo handling task in their own hands.

Chairman of Shippers Council Bangladesh Mahub Ali complained that the chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority earlier gave the assurance of getting rid of the ongoing poor shipping condition.

"Despite his repeated promises and assurance, we have not observed any improvement," said Mahub who is also the president of the BGMEA's standing committee on Ports and Shipping.

It was decided that a committee comprising all stakeholders would hold a meeting with the port chairman and the government authorities concerned on an urgent basis and continue their effort to improve the port's efficiency.

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