

# RICE CARGO SHORTAGE: INFLUENCING LOCAL FACTORS AND LOSS PREVENTION MEASURES PERSPECTIVE: CHITTAGONG & MONGLA

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Bangladesh's ministry of food mostly imports rice under G2G (government-to-government) basis from Vietnam, Thailand and India. Chittagong and Mongla, the two major ports, have draft restriction and over draft vessel need to discharge part cargo at anchorage via ship to ship operation.

Anchorage areas of Chittagong remains crowded round year, especially after June once Monsoon started. Port Authority often allow rice cargo carrying vessel at inner harbor on priority basis avoiding "First Come First Serve" berthing policy. In spite of number of loss prevention circulars from all IG and Non-IG Clubs, Shipowners and brokers, rice cargo shortage remains an ongoing events for each and every vessels at many ports of the world and indeed Chittagong and Mongla ports are not excluded from the list.

## LOSS PREVENTION MEASURES AND SURVEY PERFORMANCE



Vessels scheduled to load rice cargo compulsory carry out pre-loading surveys, moisture content test, loading under check tally, appropriate dunnage with proper stowage arrangements, ventilation system inspection, appropriate weather forecast, tarpaulins arrangement at barge, rejection of cut/torn bags while loading operation, management of Hatch cover etc. However, rice loaded from the same port results with different outcomes on completion of cargo discharge at different ports or even at the same discharge port. Standard of adopted survey procedure, lack of professional expertise at bagged cargo survey, failure to apply contingency strategy, budget limitations

for survey operation, local regulation and relevant uncontrollable issues etc. all influencing factors for load and discharge ports.

## SHORTAGE AT CHITTAGONG & MONGLA

Allegation of cargo shortage is a usual scenario of the Maritime Ports of Chittagong and Mongla. Such allegation is raised by the cargo interest on the basis of stevedore's cargo discharging records maintained in number of bags discharged. Records of such number of bags discharged is maintained by the stevedore while cargo bags are dropped onto quayside trucks instead of when lifted from cargo holds in rope slings. The root cause of cargo shortage in such cases in rough/ negligent handling of cargo bags when trying these bags into rope slings. The obvious result is bursting / tearing of substantial number of cargo bags leading to cargo spillage all around cargo holds and outside areas. Unfortunately, such consignments generally being carried on free out term. Stevedores are appointed by the cargo receivers and attending ship crew, cargo surveyors have some influence on them in effectively controlling such mishandling of cargo bags during the course of discharge. The best defence is to try to collect as much evidence as possible of such cargo mishandling and keep on serving protest letters (by the master) to the stevedore labour supervisor at regular intervals.





## LETTER OF PROTEST VS STEVEDORE'S ROUGH HANDLING

Chittagong Port maintains listed stevedoring companies who receive assignment for handling discharge operation by rotation from the respective vessel's shipping agents. Stevedore laborer, controlled by politically supported trade unions, mostly comes from port surrounding areas. Except private importers cargo, in most of the cases Shipping Agents and P&I Correspondents fails to control the stevedoring company for vessels carrying Govt. organization. Spillage and pilferage at port, valued added by poor Port's security system, works positively to worsen cargo shortage scenario. Dedicated check tally operators often work under threatening situation and have incidents where attacked by stevedore labourer when protest against pilferage.



## CHITTAGONG AND MONGLA: DIFFERENT METHODS FOR DISCHARGE CARGO QUANTIFICATION

Final discharge report at Chittagong is issued based on the bags discharged figure maintained by the stevedore while cargo bags when such bags are dropped onto quayside trucks. Whereas at Mongla, it is determined by the weight contents of randomly selected bags using the average scale procedure. Receiver raise cargo shortage on this basis and Customs Authority as well, once declared at FDR. Stevedore often prefers to designate less weight bags as sample weight to multiply the discharged number bags for daily quantification.

## USAGE OF HOOKS, ROUGH HANDLING AND RE-BAGGING WITH EXCESS CARGO

P&I Clubs and owners always recommend that stevedores should utilise correctly designed bag hooks, avoid roughly handling of cargo and to collect the spilt cargo promptly for re-bagging.

Chittagong Port Authority  
FOR SUBMISSION  
No CPA 23092013-8161

Date: 20-Sep-13  
Vehicle: PI-73-11-0182

C/N & Agent Name: FOOD  
Gross: 413

Gross Weight: 7:00 PM 26480 Kgs

Tare Weight: 12:11 PM 6440 Kgs

Net Weight: 20040 Kgs

Charge:

Weigh Bridge No: 31

Address: GATE NO.61

Lorry No:

Operator:

SURVEYED

MV NEW LEVANT ROT-227817-L-  
BDL-08-B-09

However, in practice, it has been noticed that just to expedite the discharge operation, crane operators don't give enough time to check tally clerks to count bags in sling on ship's deck when vessel is at berth. Labourer often carry out re-bagging with excess cargo to discharge with weight checking, which ultimately reduce discharged figure in a certain percentage everyday. Number of torn bags, resulting from compressional pressure within the sling load which dropped on quayside trucks, ultimately reduced once re-bagging due to spillage, pilferage and time limitations from re-bagging peoples. Though it is negligible in consideration of daily discharged figure but amalgamated figures helps to escalate the shortage issue.



## **JOINT CHECK TALLY OR INDEPENDENT CHECK TALLY**

Once joint check tally operation is carried out, it is usual that on the completion of cargo discharge the receivers, P&I Correspondents and stevedores tally figures will be similar. Appointed survey can carry out independent tally operation on board vessel. But at berth, stevedore & receiver record the number of bags discharged when bags are dropped onto quayside trucks only. Surveyor appointed by owners or correspondents find no other alternative to attend at joint tally at truck to refrain stevedore in mentioning any figure without appropriate counting, as the figure reflected at stevedore FDR are only accepted to receiver and Customs Authority.

*Stevedore rough handling| usage of hooks| Trade Union for Stevedore Labourer Supported by Political Parties*

*Budget Limitations for survey| Check Tally Operation at Truck | Local Strategies*

*Loss Prevention Measures for Load and Discharge Ports| Vessel's Responsibility*



*Indeed, P&I Clubs and shipowners recommended loss prevention measures*

and surveys (draft survey, unsealing of hatch cover, cargo condition survey) can reduce the possible cargo shortage and damage problems at Chittagong and Mongla. In addition, taking info consideration of local influencing factors, shipowners may give emphasis on sling based check tally operation for anchorage and berth while fixing vessel, with instruction for vessel to spot-checks of slings in regular interval to avoid human error.



Statement for excess bags should be maintained for load (if used/ unused) and discharge ports so that number of torn bags and re-bagged can be taken into consideration for loaded and discharged quantity. Vessel can implement certain check list for attending survey company as compliance for carrying out check tally and discharge supervision in order to ensure the standard of survey program irrespective of different ports.



**INQUIRY**

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