

LP 30/2026 Risk Alert: Dry Bulk Cargo Shortage Claims in Bangladesh

Shortage claims by cargo receivers after dry bulk discharge are common at Bangladeshi ports, and the initial amounts claimed are often significantly inflated. Such disputes may expose shipowners to unwarranted liability and cause vessel detention and delay.

This alert is based on a bulletin issued by the Club's Bangladesh correspondent, Interport Maritime Limited. For detailed analysis, case data and charts, please refer to the Interport original publication.

I. Background

Bangladesh is heavily dependent on maritime trade, with Chattogram (Chittagong) handling the vast majority of the country's cargo. The port's throughput reached a record 137.7 million tonnes in FY 2025–26. Major dry bulk imports include wheat, scrap steel, coal, raw sugar, soybeans, cement clinker and fertiliser. With rising import volumes, the frequency of cargo quantity disputes and shortage claims has also increased.

II. Key Findings (2022–2025)

- Rising trend: Total alleged shortage rose from 1,576 MT (2022) to 6,800 MT (2025); vessels involved increased from 5 to 22.
- Top cargoes: Wheat and scrap steel together account for more than half of all alleged shortage volume and case frequency.
- Most claims were reduced or unsupported: In 2025, 11 out of 22 alleged shortages were overturned by draft survey results, and 3 were reduced to an average of only 28% of the initially claimed quantity.

III. Common Causes

- Measurement errors and ship-shore discrepancies
- Draft survey manipulation by the receiver's surveyor
- Natural moisture loss and handling spillage
- Theft during discharge or storage

IV. Loss Prevention Recommendations

- Arrange joint survey with customs surveyors
- Avoid disclosure of loading-port draft survey report to the receiver
- Maintain exclusive communication with the shipowner's surveyor
- Appoint experienced marine surveyors on board
- Issue Letter of Protest in case of draft reading disputes
- Plan surveys carefully — confirm constants, read drafts carefully, record ballast water
- Include Club LOU acceptance clause in charter parties

V. Key Legal Points

- Bangladesh Supreme Court recognises draft survey results as evidence with probative value.
- The 1% trade tolerance principle (previously applied to moisture-releasing cargoes) is no longer accepted as a defence.
- There is no established practice of receivers accepting P&I Club Letters of Undertaking (LOU); cash settlement is generally insisted upon.

ATT: Interport Maritime Limited_Shortage Claims for Dry Bulk Cargo

The above is a brief summary for Members' reference. For the complete analysis, detailed case data, charts and appendices, please refer to the original bulletin by Interport Maritime Limited: "Shortage Claims for Dry Bulk Cargo". For specific advice, please contact Managers of the Association.