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# Hambantota Port strategically important to Sri Lanka

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The construction of the Hambantota Port is strategically important to Sri Lanka as the country would be in a position to handle general cargo and the repair work speedily and concentrate on container handling at the Colombo Port, Chairman, Ceylon Association for Ships' Agents (CASA) Capt. Ajith Peiris said.

The ship repair facility between Singapore and Dubai is insufficient and we could give priority for this at the Hambantota Port. This will also avoid unnecessary delays for ships calling at the Colombo Port for repairs. We are confident that the construction of the Hambantota Port could be completed by the last quarter of 2010, he said.



Chinese construction workers at the construction site of the new Hambantota harbor in Hambantota.

The global downturn affected economies and shipping lines too were affected. However, we are hopeful that the traffic will

increase in the near future as certain segments are already showing an improvement. We need to be geared to face this vol-

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ume and consolidate our position, he said.

It is time to look for other avenues to generate revenue. One possible solution is to branch out. This will compensate the losses. We need to look for business opportunities to venture out. This sort of strategy is better than waiting for things to happen. Diversity is the best way to cover losses, he said.

We hope that the downward trend will not be further affected and will improve in time to come. Asia will prosper after the recession much faster than the West, but we need the West also to do well as we need them for commercial dealings. If there is a no-taker our products and services could not be sold, he said.

The shipping industry will remain one of the dominant industries in our country as it plays a vital role in cargo transportation. We are quite impressed with the progress of construction work of the Hambantota Port and with its completion the country is poised to handle an increased volume of cargo and containers, he said.