

NEW MOORING CONTAINER TERMINAL PROJECT

Delay in implementation costs Tk 69 cr more



The under-construction New Mooring Container Terminal

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

The government is to count extra Tk 69 crore as construction work of New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) has been delayed for one year. Tk 434 crore project was supposed to be completed in 30 months by October 9. With the stipulated time expired, the consultancy firm Vecome has stopped work while the construction firm China Harbour reportedly prepares to wrap up work demanding revised consultancy fee and construction cost for working during the extended time, sources said. The caretaker government has approved the revised project proposal at a meeting on November 8 extending the implementation time up to December

31, 2007.

It also raised the project cost to Tk 503 crore from Tk 434 crore, said the sources.

Under the revised proposal the construction firm will get Tk 388 crore as against Tk 331 crore it quoted in the tender while the consultancy firm around Tk 14 crore as against Tk 13 crore, sources said.

The NCT project involving Tk 737.24 crore was approved on May 12, 1999 to be implemented in two phases.

The project cost includes Tk 434 crore for developing infrastructure of the container terminal at New Mooring area and Tk 296.24 crore for installation of handling equipment.

China Harbour won the tender quoting a price of Tk 331 crore for construction of the terminal with five berths over two other bid-

ders, including Hyundai that quoted Tk 431 crore.

Sources said difference between the prices quoted by the lowest and second lowest bidders raised a question at that time.

After winning the tender China Harbour started delaying the construction work demanding a revised and increased cost for the project on the plea of price hike of construction materials, sources added.

Despite facing a threat of confiscation of its "earnest money", the firm later succeeded to have an assurance of raising the project cost in several phases exploiting loopholes in the agreement signed with the government, they said.

China Harbour had already drawn around 80 per cent of the construction cost with only two of

five berths completed, said the sources.

About the delay in implementing the project, Project Director (PD) Engineer Sirajul Islam of Chittagong Port Authority attributed land acquisition for this.

"It took us as long as 28 months to get the land acquired for developing back-up facilities, including the yards behind the berths," he said.

"We got the acquired lands to hand them over to the contractor for development in June 13 this year and after dynamic decompaction of the land we could make two of the berths ready for formal operation on September 4," he said.

Sirajul claimed construction of all the five berths have been completed.

Three yards, each measuring 20,000 square metres, were

developed behind three berths, including the two that underwent operation in September.

The tender specification did not include yards behind two other berths, he said.

He said time had to be extended to develop backup facilities for the berths and rerouting the existing structures like railway tracks, PDB and Wasa connection lines running through the acquired land.

Regarding the raise in the project cost, Sirajul said an additional amount of Tk 30 crore had to be spent when they paid Tk 70 crore as land acquisition and dislodgement money as against Tk 40 crore.

Besides, inflation of dollar and rise in prices of construction materials increased the project cost, he added.

MIRERSARAI CONSTITUENCY

AL remains sluggish while BNP rivals fight for party ticket

DWAIPAYAN BARUA and NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

While eight rival BNP aspirants fight for party ticket for the upcoming election, Awami League (AL) activities remain sluggish at Mirersarai (Chittagong-1) constituency.

With the defection of BNP lawmaker Mohammad Ali Jinnah to the newly formed Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by former president A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury and Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed, the party in the constituency will face division over nomination. On the other hand, AL has no strong organisational activities here, local people said.

AL Chittagong (North) district unit president and former minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain is the lone nomination seeker from the party for the polls so far.

He, however, lost to Jinnah in 1991 and 2001 elections by narrow margin.

Engineer Mosharraf said he would win if election is held in a free and fair manner.

The party men and supporters as well as the people said winning won't be easy for AL in the constituency if it fails to make the organisation strong and intensify activities at grassroots level.

Most of them blamed upazila committee President Md Ali and

General Secretary Nurul Huda for the weak organisational activities of the party.

They said Ali and Huda have been holding the posts for three consecutive times without playing any role in improving the party activities here.

Mosharraf, however, refuted the allegation.

Meanwhile, eight aspirants collected nomination forms seeking party ticket for the polls. Jinnah said he is confident of defeating any BNP candidate, including its chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The local people, however, said Jinnah with LDP ticket will not be able to affect BNP or AL candidate.

They said rather more than one aspirants for BNP ticket will be a factor and may change the poll result.

The BNP aspirants are Mirer Sarai thana committee member Dr MM Emran Chowdhury, BNP advisory committee member Major General (Retd) ZA Khan, Prof Kamal Uddin Chowdhury, thana committee convener Dr Md Nur Nabi, Chittagong (north) district unit General Secretary Shahjahan Siraj, Karer Hat UP Chairman Delwar Hossain, thana committee member Atiqul Islam Latifi, and Jubo Dal Chittagong (north) district unit General Secretary Haji MA Kasem.

Dr Emran and Prof Kamal have already started campaign at field levels, local people said.

A number of billboards, posters and graffiti have already

occupied different points at Mirersarai upazila headquarters, Barariarhat and other areas.

Referring to Prof Kamal, Dr Nabi said a person with only business background and without any contribution to politics is unlikely to get party ticket.

Dr Emran echoed the same sentiment and is confident of getting party nomination.

"Most of the leaders and activists of almost all the units of BNP and its front organisations are with me," he said.

He said he would accept the party decision in this regard and support any person who gets the nomination.

Dr Nabi said, "All the capable leaders and activists have the right to seek party nomination. But, it would be difficult for us to accept a non-political person as candidate when many dedicated leaders are aspiring for the party ticket."

Sources said local BNP sent copies of a resolution to Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Secretary General Mannan Bhuiyan and Senior Joint Secretary General Tariq Rahman urging them to nominate a person having contribution to the party politics.

Prof Kamal said, "Madam (Khaleda) at a meeting on November 8 assured me of party ticket to contest the forthcoming election from Mirersarai."

Dr Emran and Prof Kamal blamed each other for harbouring party dissidents at different occasions.



Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Prof Kamal Uddin Chowdhury and MA Jinnah

the week that was

Book fair begins

A 16-day book fair began in the port city on Friday marking the Victory Day. Muktahdara Publication organised the fair on the eve of Victory Day at Studio Theatre Hall in cooperation with Bati Ghar, a book outlet of Chittagong. Inaugurating the fair as the chief guest, Prof Alamgir Mohammed Sirajuddin, former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University (CU), lauded

Muktahdara for making the new generations acquainted with the history of nation through books it published.

Prof Hossain Kabir, journalist Biswajit Chowdhury, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCI) Secretary Ovik Osman, cultural activist Shahrier Khaled, Rothin Sen, Mozammel Mahmud and Dipankar Das also spoke at the inaugural ceremony.

The fair offers 30 per cent discount on different types of book of

Muktahdara.

Street drama on AIDS Day

RanksTel, a land phone company, organised a street drama "Banchar Gan" on the occasion of "World AIDS Day" in the port city on Friday.

The drama was organised with a

slogan titled "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise" on the footpath at GEC Intersection to create awareness about HIV/AIDS.

RanksTel Head of Sales Mir Moinuddin Ahmed spoke about the dangers and impact of the disease and the ways and means to fight it.

Director Sales of the company Saiful Islam directed the drama.

Mohiuddin pledges to implement CHT deal

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury on Saturday said he will take initiative to implement Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace agreement if Awami League led 14-party combine is voted to power in the upcoming general election.

He was addressing as the chief guest a discussion on the occasion of 9th anniversary of CHT agreement at Muslim Institute Hall.

Ninth Anniversary Observation Committee organised the meeting with the committee Convener Dipayan Khisa in the chair.

Mohiuddin, also president of Chittagong city Awami League and Chittagong division coordinator of 14-party, said non-implementation of the accord in the last nine years is "regrettable."

He called upon the hill people to be united to protect their rights.

Poet and Journalist Abul Momen, CU Prof Dr Hamida Banu, Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad Joint General Secretary advocate Rana Das Gupta, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal leader Razekuzzaman Ratan, Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity member Palash Khisa, Pahari

Chhatra Parishad Organising Secretary Udayan Tripura, Joysen Tanchangya and Sarat Joyti Chakma also spoke.

'Cancel CHT agreement'

Parbatyia Bangali Chhatra Parishad on Saturday formed a human chain demanding cancellation of 'CHT peace agreement' and removal of Santu Larma from the post of CHT Regional Council Chairman.

The Parishad organised the programme in front of Chittagong Press Club in cooperation with its' Chittagong University and Chittagong City units.

The leaders at a rally said Santu Larma along with his men in Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) continued repression on the Bangalees in the hill districts.

They urged the government to intensify security in the hill districts with deployment of more army forces to save the non-tribal people.

Parishad General Secretary Mohammed Alamgir Kabir, Vice-President Parvez Talukder, SM Mohiuddin, Chittagong City unit President Abdul Hamid, General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Baten, Chittagong University unit President Salah Uddin and General Secretary Osman Gani spoke at the rally.

Training for intending Hajj pilgrims

A day-long training for intending Hajj pilgrims of Mayor Hajj Kafela was held at Jamiatul Falah National Mosque in the port city on Saturday.

vote of people with disability'

Speakers at a civic dialogue in the port city on Saturday emphasised the need for ensuring right to franchise of the people with disability in the upcoming election and involving them with election activities.

They called upon the government and non-government developing organisations to come forward to make Chittagong a disabled-friendly district.

Centre for Disable Concern (CDC) organised the dialogue in cooperation with ADD, an international organisation for development of the people with disability, at Shilpakala Academy auditorium on the occasion of International Disable day.

Chittagong Deputy Commissioner (DC) Al-Nuri Fayzur Reza was the chief guest at the dialogue with writer Begum Runu Siddique in the chair.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) General Mohiuddin Ahmed Khan, Ward Commissioner Sabiha Musa, CDC Director Mohammed Kamal Uddin, Selim Nazrul, Chittagong Ladies Club President Zinat Azam, Daily Bhorer Kagoj Bureau Chief Omar Kaiser and Chittagong Medical Social Welfare Officer Paruma Begum took part in the dialogue.

Al-Nuri in his speech said a disabled rehabilitation centre will be set up in Chittagong to offer various trainings to the people with disability.

Earlier, the disabled brought out a colourful procession carrying posters, banners and festoons.



Former CU vice-chancellor Dr Alamgir Mohammed Sirajuddin, fourth from right, flips through a book at a stall after inaugurating a book fair at Studio Theatre hall on Friday.



Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) Association President Akhter Hossain inaugurates the Health Corner at Chittagong Press Club on Wednesday.