

Land acquisition obstacle to setting up container terminal

NURUL ALAM

Chittagong district administration is yet to hand over 14 acres of private land at port area to Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) to build a container terminal, port sources said.

The district administration could not yet acquire those lands though the land ministry gave permission in this regard, port sources added.

Installation of container terminal may be delayed further unless the land could be acquired.

District administration sent some contingent of police last week to recover the land. In the face of resistance from the owners of the land, police returned without acquiring the land though CPA was ready to pay due compensation for the land, officials said.

CPA Chairman Shahadat

Hossain said efforts were on to acquire the land through a negotiated settlement with the owners. He said about 200 families are staying there, he said. "We are trying to acquire their lands through mutual understanding without applying any force," he said.

"We have taken a soft approach now to acquire the private land through negotiation with the dwellers as it is difficult to evict 200 families at a time from their homestead. We don't want to do anything inhuman with them," CPA chairman said.

"It is obviously a big hurdle for us as we are facing problem on our way to install the container terminal to raise port efficiency," he added. "We already had meetings with the private owners and dwellers and we would continue to achieve the target and we would provide them with due compensation against the land,"

he said. "We are also thinking of rehabilitating the affected people as they have been living there for a long time," he said adding "Now we have 41 acres of land owned by the port itself and we need more 14 acres for implementation of the container project."

"Besides, we will have to remove 3,000 empty containers from port yards before starting the construction works of the terminal. We have already initiated the process to remove the same," the chairman said. "However, we hope to launch the groundbreaking work by middle of March."

Meanwhile, Chinese construction firm China Harbour Ltd signed a contract with CPA recently for setting up the container terminal at the port area, officials said.

The representative of China Harbour Ltd Zhou Jing Xiong and

CPA Chairman Shahadat Hossain signed the contract on behalf of their respective sides.

The construction work is scheduled to complete within 30 months.

After commissioning of this new container terminal, Chittagong port will be able to handle additional 500,000 containers annually.

"We are also expecting an additional revenue earning of Tk 400 crore a year from this new terminal," CPA chairman said adding that it would raise efficiency of Chittagong port in handling container cargo.

The new terminal of 1,000-metre length if built, may allow berthing of five container vessels at a time for handling, he said.



STAR PHOTO

Devout Hindus flock to Chandranath temple on the hilltop at Sitakunda, top left, on the occasion of Shiva Chaturdashi held on February 18-19. The Sadhus (holy men) also gather around the temple to celebrate the religious festival.

Three more CNG stations in port city, still not enough

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD

Three more Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) refuelling stations started operation in last one month raise the number in the port city to four.

However, the number was still very poor to cater the need.

As the lone refuelling station of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) at Dampara was overburdened with the huge demand of some 5,000 CNG-run vehicles, one such station Sea-gold at

Baroaulia started operation last month.

CNG Station Kolka started operation early this month at port connecting road at Halishahar while Karnaphuli Natural Gas Ltd in front of General Post Office on Monday on an experimental

basis.

Besides, 14 more stations to be set up on Railway land and over a dozen reportedly on Roads & Highways land, were either under construction or under process.

Development or installation process of eight CNG stations is claimed to have been going on the Railway land.

Stipulated nine-month time for setting up of two, one at Holy Crescent Hospital adjoining area and another at Sholoshahar

Gate No.2 area, has already expired.

The Railway authorities handed over the leased out land on March 30 and May 8 to persons concerned last year.

Six others, two each at Pahartoli and Tigerpass, one each at Kadamtoni and Janalihut, were claimed to be under implementation.

Four of them had the land leased out to one Messers Afser and Ilias at Tigerpass (adjoining to Dewanhat over-bridge) raised a dispute with GRP (railway police), Railway sources said.

Of the rest six, signing of

agreements of five with railway, reportedly is under process while one intended leasee, UCBL Chairman Zafar Ahmad Chowdhury, applied for withdrawal of the money deposited for the land he got lease at Kalurghat, sources in Railway said.

Meanwhile, leasing out of

Railway lands at Tigerpass and Polo Ground area sparked a huge criticism.

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