

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 it 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.



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 Criscent 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 Kadamtoli and Janalihat, were claimed to be under implementation. Four of them had the land recently while 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.

Six pieces of lands for installation of CNG stations were within less than two kilometers stretch from Kadamtoli to Tigerpass.

Two of them were located beside a busy road at Polo Ground. They were just beside the entry point of Railway Officers' Club adjoining to a posh residential area and within several hundred yards off another CNG station under-installation at Kadamtoli crossing.

Local people and other concerned circles said any refuelling station at this point would not only hinder traffic movement but also create environmental hazards for the residents.

Another CNG station beside the CDA Avenue between Lalkhan Bazar Ispahani and Tigerpass intersections was feared to hamper the picturesque roadside hill as well as traffic movement.

Mosharraf Hossain, Director of Department of Environment (DoE), Chittagong said, "We would make objection to setting up of any such installation at those areas though have relaxed certificate issuing process for CNG stations."

"We noticed of initiatives of such stations at those areas, but nobody applied to us for certificate." DoE inspectors had visited the areas but could not contact the owners as they had no address other than signboards there," Mosharraf said.

Chief Estate Officer of Bangladesh Railway said leasing out land for CNG stations is directly done by Railway Administration of the Ministry of Communications in Dhaka and refrained from making any comment.

When asked to give opinion on the slow progress of installation of CNG stations, Chittagong City Awami League Environment Secretary Khorshed Alam Sujan said, "Such installation needs a huge investment where the investor is not sure of the expected return. It discourages the real businessmen."

Sujan said government lands were being leased for CNG stations, but real businessmen could hardly avail of those.

"Mostly non-businessmen having ruling party connection are getting the leased out lands, which were mostly going under alternate use," he said.

"Signboards reading 'site for CNG Station' have been put up at 12 points of Roads and Highways land along Dhaka-Chittagong highway from Olonker intersection to Mirersarai but there is no development work so far," he said.

"The preferences and facilities should be offered to right persons, who really want to and able to set up such installations," Sujan added.



Authorickshaws wait in a long queue at the CNG refuelling station at Dampara in the port city although three more stations have been set up in the last one month.

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Book on Iraq war

City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at a simple ceremony here on Wednesday unveiled the cover of a book 'Iraq Ranaganey' written by journalist Anis Alamgir.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury said the book is a documentary reflection of experience of a journalist who witnessed one of the brutal wars against the people of Iraq.

"As a Chittagonian we are proud of Anis Alamgir who also hailed from the district and happened to be the first journalist from this sub-continent to cover the war," City Mayor said at the ceremony at Lalidighi Maidan.

Noted poet Sukumar Barua, Jamal Khan ward commissioner MA Naser, Denor Aiker Kagoj staff reporters Tapan Chakrabarty and Mohsin Kazi, acting public relation officer of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Ashok Rasul Chowdhury Tipu and former student leader Shanta Barua were present.

Dev work inaugurated

Development works of Late Obaidur Rahman Road in East Nasirabad under City Corporation's Shulakbahar ward started on Thursday. Ward

commissioner Mamunur Rashid Mamun inaugurated the works.

"The five-year plan taken for the development of this ward is now near completion," the ward commissioner said.

Rupali Bank Deputy General Manager, KSB Azad, ward Awami League President Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, former jailor Ittekar Uddin, Nasirabad Mohalla Committee President Nurul Islam Chowdhury, local elderly persons Nazu Meah, Nazir Meah Jaminder, Shafiqur Rahman and Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Habibur Rahman Tarek also addressed the function.

Int'l Sunni confce ends

A two-day International Sunni Conference was ended at the Jamiatul Falah Maidan on Saturday with a call for forging greater unity among the Muslims around the world.

Religious leaders from different countries took part in the conference organised by Organisation of Ahle Sunnat Conference (OAC) Bangladesh. Allama Kazi Muhammad Nurul Islam Hashemi presided.

Lawmaker from Indian Northern Province and renowned Islamic thinker Allama Obaidullah Khan Azmi spoke as key speaker, Muhammad Hossain Rezvi Siddiquee Abul Hakkani, Mufti Obaidul

Haq Naimee, Syed Mohammad Osial Rahman, Kazi Muinuddin Ashrafi and Syed Abdul Baki Shahjee addressed the conference.

'Drug Bangladesh' launched

A new book entitled "Drug Bangladesh" was launched formally at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club on Monday morning.

Three expert physicians on different discipline have jointly written the book and it was published by Drug Information Centre (DIC) in Chittagong aimed at helping general practitioners and physicians in their day-to-day works. The writers are Dr AFM Saiful Islam, Dr Aminuddin A Khan and Dr Selim Mohammad Jahangir.

DIC System Manager Dr Mamunur Rashid told "The press conference that the book divided in three parts is designed to provide current, reliable information about drugs to facilitate assessment of both the risk benefit and cost benefit."

"Part A outlines the common factors that provide the context against which individual drugs benefit and risk need to be considered. Part B is the compilation of basic information about drugs and Part C featured product information such as dosage formulations and brand names of drug along with price," he said.

DIC officials Rezaul Amin and Mozammel Haq were also present.

Centenary festival

A two-day festival to mark the centenary of Mahamuni Anglo-Pali High School in Raozan ended at the school premises on Saturday. Former student of the school, Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury was present as chief guest in the celebrations.

Justice Khademul Islam

Masih-ul-Karim, Managing Director, Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited, inaugurated the third Berger ColorBank at Mallik Hardware Stores in the port city on February 19. Rupali Chowdhury, Director Operations, Mohsin Habib Chowdhury, Marketing Manager, high officials of Berger and eminent personalities of the city attended the inaugural function.

while recalling his early academic days said, "I feel proud being a former student of this glorious school that produced so many talented and meritorious students." He urged all to keep the school image high.

Chaired by principal Ferdous Chowdhury, the function was also addressed by Dr. Supriyo Barua, Syed Ruhul Haq, Tarani Sen Barua, Pranab Mutsuddi, Amirul Haq, Rakhal Chandra Dey, Professor Zharna Barua and Snehatosh Barua.

Special honours were given to former headmaster Sudhangshu Bimal Barua (posthumously) and former student, noted Islamic thinker Ahmedul Haq Chowdhury.

Chess competition for visually disabled

The three-day Chittagong Divisional Chess Competition for the visually disabled players was ended here on Sunday.

Mohammad Amir Hossain, a student of Law in Chittagong University, clinched the title while Abu Naeem Mamun of Comilla became runners up and Mohammad Rafiqul Islam of Brahmanbaria third in the meet organised by Research and Education for the Differently Able (Reda).

A total of 30 players from different districts took part in the competition held for the

first time. Jahanara Begum and Begum Tanjina Chowdhury of Chittagong became champion and runners up in women group. The winners also received certificates and cash.

Traffic week inaugurated

A traffic week of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) was inaugurated on Monday morning.

CMP Commissioner SM Sabbir Ali inaugurated the week at a simple ceremony at city's Atmashing Crossing area under Kotwali Thana.

On the first day, a total of 242 vehicles including bus, truck, microbus, pickup, motorcycle, auto-rickshaw with faulty documents or without proper licenses were sued and around Tk 4,000 realised as fine.

Additional Commissioner Mohammad Amjad Hossain, Deputy Commissioner (Traffic) Mohammad Rafiqul Islam and other top officials of CMP were present at the function.

Smuggled teak timber seized

A patrol team of Chittagong South Forest Division seized

smuggled teak timber worth Tk 1.5 lakh from a pickup on the Chittagong-Kaptai Road at Madunaghat area under Hathazari Thana on Wednesday morning.

Deputy Ranger Mohammad Moniruzzaman assisted by forest personnel and guards led the operation. A case has been filed in this connection with Hathazari Police Station.

Reinstatement of hotel workers demanded

Leaders of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (Skop), Chittagong at a protest meeting condemned the recent termination of workers at Hotel Agrabad and few other city hotels and demanded their immediate reinstatement.

The meeting was held on Wednesday with Trade Union Sangha (TUS) General Secretary Ali Haider in the chair. Skop leaders AM Nazimuddin, ATM Nizamuddin, Tapan Dutta, Nurul Islam, Anwar Hossain and Khorshed Alam, Dock Bandar workers' leader Nurullah Bahar and transport leader Yakub Ali addressed the meeting.

They said the Hotel Agrabad authorities had resorted to muscle power and ignored labour law to sack its workers depriving them of their rightful dues and benefits.