

PROCEEDINGS OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED PORT FACILITY AT DIAMOND HARBOUR (PFDH) WITH A DEVELOPMENT AREA OF 50.60 Ha ON THE EASTERN BANK OF RIVER HOOGLY, DIST. – 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH), WEST BENGAL BY KOLKATA PORT TRUST HELD ON 21.12.2010 AT 12:00 NOON AT THE OFFICE OF THE SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICER, DIAMOND HARBOUR, 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH), WEST BENGAL.

M/s Kolkata Port Trust submitted an application to West Bengal Pollution Control Board for conducting Public Hearing for the proposed Port Facility at Diamond Harbour (PFDH) with a development area of 50.60 Ha on the Eastern Bank of River Hoogly, Dist.-24 Parganas (South), West Bengal. As per the EIA notification S.O.1533 dated 14th September, 2006 of the MoEF, Govt. of India, Environmental Clearance of the said project is required to be obtained from the MoEF, Govt. of India after conducting Public Hearing. Accordingly, WBPCB after observing all formalities, held a Public Hearing on 21.12.2010 at 12:00 noon at the office of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Diamond Harbour, West Bengal. Sri N. Sandilya, Additional District Magistrate (Development), 24 Parganas (South) presided over the hearing. All the panel members were present in the hearing. A considerable gathering was also present in the hearing. List of the panel members and the others present in the Public Hearing are enclosed.

The hearing started with a welcome note from Dr. D. Maulik, Environmental Engineer, West Bengal Pollution Control Board. She explained about the provisions of the above stated MoEF notifications and also informed the audience about the draft proposal of M/s Kolkata Port Trust for the proposed Port Facility at Diamond Harbour (PFDH) with a development area of 50.60 Ha on the Eastern Bank of River Hoogly, 24 Parganas (South) alongwith the need for obtaining prior permission from CRZ authority. The Additional District Magistrate (Development), then requested the Project Proponent to explain the details about the proposed project for discussion among the panel members and the others present in the hearing.

Dr. A. K. Nath, KoPT then explained about the project by Power Point presentation emphasizing on the likely environmental impacts arising out of the same as well as the proposed pollution abatement measures to be taken by them.

During the discussion the panel members and the others present in the Public Hearing made queries / suggestions with respect to the proposed project which are noted below:-

Shri Deepak Kumar Halder, "Sahakari Shavapati", Panchayat Samity, Diamond Harbour Block – I, assured that they would support new developmental activities but in this case the project proponent should specify clearly the land details of the proposed project site. He reminded that although the project has not been proposed in private land, but in reality in this case many people have settled within this area and are staying in that particular region for a very long time. The project proponent should have also addressed rehabilitation issues and should have mentioned about the re-location policy in detail.

Shri Umapada Purakait, AITUC, Savapati, Diamond Harbour Block – I, also mentioned that they want the port facility but the project proponent should be more specific about the fate of the settlers who are residing within the project area at present. He demanded proper rehabilitation plan along with demand for employment of the local people in this proposed project.

Shri Dilip Das, resident, Sultanpur Village in tune with his two predecessors requested the project proponent to delineate the proposed port facility and to demonstrate it among the people. He apprehended that the estimated 50.60 ha. land requirement for the proposed port facility cannot be adjusted from the government land. The port is likely to acquire land from the neighbourhood residential areas. The project may also be set up at Kulpi. He asked the project proponent to identify the specific land parcel which would be used for this project and also to prepare list of the settlers who are residing in those particular land parcels and to prepare rehabilitation schemes.

Shri Sachchidananda Das, resident, Dakshin Sultanpur Gram and Karmadhakshya, Diamond Harbour, mentioned that the fishermen are usually economically backward and are not properly educated. He

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expressed his concern that if the fishermen are relocated from their current locations it will be difficult for them to get a suitable job in other places as they do not have the adequate skills to adopt to other jobs. Before accepting this project proposal the future of the fishermen should be understood.

Shri Sudip Kumar Mondal, Maya Road, also expressed his concern for those families who reside within the government land.

Shri Vikash Chandra Das, resident Dakshin Sultanpur Gram mentioned that one fishing harbour exists within the proposed dock facility. The full capacity of the fishing harbour is yet to be finalized. He stated that although the villagers understand the significance of the terminal block coming up in the location of the fishing harbour, even then he requested the port authorities to consider a proposal for setting up of a terminal block in adjacent areas where a good number of brick fields are operating under private ownership.

Shri Tapan Naskar, villager and Ice factory owner, Dakshin Sultanpur Gram mentioned about the small scale industries operating within the proposed project site and also requested the project proponent to clarify whether these industries would be relocated or not. At this stage the Additional District Magistrate requested the Port Trust to respond to the issues raised by the house.

Mr. A. K. Mehra, Chief Engineer, Port Trust, mentioned that the port has obtained written communication from the Fisheries Department, Government of West Bengal in regard to the fishing harbour. As per this communication, the land for fishing harbour might be provided by the Government of West Bengal for the work of dock facility. However, he clarified that in the first phase of the port would start the work in Dock I, II, III and at this stage there is no question of acquiring private land. Only if the project is further extended and is accepted by the neighbourhood people then only further expansion would take place. He also stated that the port is trying to propose rehabilitation of the settlers in new locations and are also trying to obtain land for the same purpose. He also explained that the port activity is a labour intensive activity and the activity proposed in connection to tractors / trailers and barge handling and management would involve the local people. Such business would require basic knowledge on neighbourhood area and the river characteristics in this particular stretch. So people who know the river well and also the surrounding area would be in an advantageous position to obtain the benefits of this proposed dock facility He reminded that if the fishing harbour is finally relocated then the small scale industries operations linked to fishing may also lose the business prospects and relocation in that case would be a better alternative. He clarified that this particular location has been selected because of its navigational advantages and connectivity in terms of railways and road network.

Shri Nanigopal Halder, fisherman, resident, Dakshin Sultanpur also mentioned that the dock facility is proposed because of the suitability of location with respect to hydro-geological parameters. He requested the project proponent to clarify why the existing standby arrangement would not be expanded.

Shri Utpal Singh, the Traffic Manager of Port Trust mentioned that the existing standby facility is a "anchorage activity" which can take place within the river for handling of lighter materials. However, for handling of containers with load more than 20 tons - a full fledged dock facility is required and the required adequate draft is only available in this particular stretch of river, and, therefore, this stretch of river is more suitable for development of port facilities in comparison to the existing 'anchorage' area or the brick-field areas. Further the rail and road connectivity is also satisfactory in this particular location. He along with Mr. Mehra also emphasized that construction of warehousing, loading and unloading activity at the port would increase the scope of employment and business in this particular locality.

Shri Nanigopal Halder, Shri Vikash Chandra Das expressed their concern for the relocation programme

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and the reservation for relocation of the fisherman by shifting the fish harbour. Shri Janmajoy Ghosh, Pradhan, Kanpurdharmaberia, also reiterated these concerns.

Shri Ashutos Das and Shri Debangshu Purakait, villagers, Sultanpur Gram mentioned that in the leaflet it has been shown that the project covers a 500 mtr wide strip from the river bank. This strip is likely to cover their residences.

The port representatives once again assured that during the construction and container movement the local residents will not be disturbed. The project width shall be less than what has been shown in the leaflet and the private houses will not be included within the project area. In fact, only the land for loading and unloading of the containers for rail would be used for this project.

Dr. D. Maulik, Environmental Engineer, West Bengal Pollution Control Board once again reiterated the need for prior CRZ clearance of this project and requested the project proponent to modify the EIA / EMP report as per the additional Terms of Reference (ToR) issued by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India. The water supply and solid waste management proposal should be designed with requisite details.

The Additional District Magistrate, 24 Parganas (South) mentioned that the development process should be properly coordinated so that the concern of the local residents are adequately and satisfactorily addressed and there is a balance between the aspirations of the local people, environmental issues and the developmental activities. He requested the Kolkata Port Trust to explore each and every scope to resolve the issues raised in the public hearing and to submit the details plan on

1. water supply
2. solid waste management and
3. drainage.

He conveyed his thanks to the audience for participating in this public hearing and providing valuable inputs for the proposed dock facility.

(D. Maulik)

Environmental Engineer,
West Bengal Pollution Control Board

(N. Sandilya)

Addl. District Magistrate (Development),
24 Parganas (South)