

Maritime Professional

Title: India to set up port in Bangladesh

Author: Joseph Fonseca

Location:

Article date: 15 May, 2013

Inland container port to come up at Narayanganj in neighboring Bangladesh will greatly help movement of cargo to North East India and also bring down cost.

As a result of the deepening relationship with Bangladesh, India is increasingly looking to improving economic partnerships as there is growing realization that increased co-operation will bring substantial socio-economic benefits that can no longer be overlooked. As a major development in this direction, India has agreed to set up an inland container port at Narayanganj, in Bangladesh. The Ministry of External Affairs of the government of India has invited global bids for techno-commercial feasibility study for setting up the inland container port (pre-bid date: 24 May 2013).

Development of a port almost in the heart of Bangladesh, which is surrounded by India, Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal is being seen to greatly facilitate cargo movement to and from these North East and Eastern states of India. Much of the international cargo from Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal could move along the inland waterways as well as by road and rail through the port of Narayanganj.

Indo-Bangladesh relationship has deepened over the past few years. The two countries' geographical locations complement each other and present an opportunity for both to further develop their connectivity links and economies. Today, as the recent improvement in relations suggests, there is a growing realization that increased cooperation will bring substantial socio-economic benefits that can no longer be overlooked. Clearly, over the last decade, both the countries have witnessed a qualitative transformation in virtually all areas of bilateral cooperation making the relationship a truly multi-faceted one. But as in many such relationships, there are continued challenges to overcome too. With mutual cooperation these could very well be a thing of the past.

The proposed inland container port will be set up on a 40 acre plot of land in Narayanganj on the banks of Sitalakhya River. Bangladesh is interested in having the port set up jointly with an Indian partner, having experience in setting up and operating inland ports. The proposed study is expected to be completed in 14 weeks in four phases.

Basically, the Techno-Commercial Feasibility Report (TSFR) should provide an insight into traffic pattern, financial appraisal, etc. The successful bidder will have to visit the required location to accumulate and analyze the collected data, make an assessment of the location, review the industrial clusters and production centers, review of the functional ICDS and CFSS, examine the road connectivity and the traffic pattern. Notably the report should provide the traffic projections for the next 15 to 20 years as well as the commercial feasibility of the proposed inland container port.

Providing inputs Anand Sharma of Mantrana Maritime Advisory Pvt. Ltd. stated, "The Indian government has been directly investing in other countries as well including Myanmar, Iran and other countries. This is the first project being undertaken in the logistic sector. There is lot of coastal activity in the region directed to North East India, including Assam and Tripura. With the port coming up it will be a boon for India as there will be significant cost saving for good moving through this proposed port."