

Chattogram port activity disrupted as strike over NCT leasing plan continues

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Dhaka: Operations at Chattogram port were again severely disrupted on February 2 as port workers continued an eight-hour work stoppage for a third straight day, protesting a proposed plan to lease the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to Dubai-based logistics company DP World.

The work abstention began at 8:00 am, leading to a near standstill in container handling and cargo operations at multiple jetties, according to port users. Loading and unloading from vessels slowed dramatically, while delivery of goods from port yards was suspended throughout the strike period.

The disruption also affected inland logistics, with container movements between Chattogram port and 19 privately operated inland container depots coming to a halt. The strike was organized by the Chattogram Bandar Rokkha Sangram Parishad and the local unit of the Jatiyatabadi

Sramik Dal, both demanding that the government abandon plans to lease the NCT.

The Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) rejected the workers' claims, describing the protest as unwarranted and emphasizing that no final agreement has been signed regarding the terminal lease.

Amid the ongoing unrest, the CPA issued transfer orders for 12 employees in two rounds on Saturday evening, bringing the total number of transferred staff to 16. Protest leaders said the transferred employees were actively involved in the demonstrations and accused port authorities of using administrative measures to undermine the movement.

A senior leader of the Sramik Dal alleged that the port authority had compiled a list of around 200 employees participating in the protests and was transferring them in phases to weaken resistance. Protesters described the moves as an attempt to apply pressure and suppress dissent.

CPA Director (Administration) Md Omar Faruk denied the allegations, saying the transfers were routine administrative actions made for operational needs and had no connection to the ongoing strike.

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