

National interest to get priority at Chattogram Port: Shipping Minister

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Dhaka: Road Transport and Bridges, Railways, and Shipping Minister Sheikh Rabiul Alam said the government will give priority to national interest in engaging any foreign operator for Chattogram Port handling.

“National interests will get priority at the time of appointing a foreign operator for goods handling at NCT of Chattogram Port,” he said during a briefing after visiting NCT-5 Jetty of Chattogram Port on April 19.

It’s the first visit of the Shipping Minister to Chattogram Port since taking office.

Pointing out the current agitation of the port workers against appointing a foreign operator, the minister said, “The workers may reconsider their protest if the foreign operator can contribute to the port's economic

growth. The workers will certainly remain for the country's interests.”

Regarding the importance of foreign investment in the port, Sheikh Rabiul Alam said, “Those who want to invest in this port certainly have some considerations. They will consider the facilities provided by countries like Sri Lanka and Vietnam. In this context, we need to operate in a competitive global environment.”

The minister mentioned the government’s plan to initiate new projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP). International organizations have expressed interest in the landlord model, aiming to offer investment and technical support, he said, adding that this will enhance the efficiency of managing the container terminals.

He said several problems were identified during his visit to the port. The progress of Chattogram Port is positive. However, there is room for attracting more improvement, he added.

The minister said some initial decisions were taken to resolve the existing problems. A final decision will be made after discussing in the interministerial meeting, he said.

Emphasizing the government's goals, he said priorities are being given to the areas that have high potential to contribute to economic growth and prosperity, and Chattogram Port is one of those crucial sectors.

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