

Campus

Chandpur tech campus: Academic activities may not start this year



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The hope of starting academic activities at Chandpur Science and Technology University on the proposed land is dashed again as the deadline for depositing compensation for land acquisition is over.

There was a legal binding of depositing money to the Land Acquisition Fund of Chandpur Deputy Commissioner's office within 120 working days.

The DC office confirmed no money was deposited till yesterday – the deadline for deposit.

Though the land acquisition process remains stalled over alleged price manipulation by some local ruling party activists, the university authorities were hopeful of beginning academic sessions this year with the buildings on the proposed land.

Meanwhile, the senior metropolitan special judge's court issued a travel ban on Chandpur's Laxmipur Union Chairman Selim Khan who was allegedly involved in price manipulation of the land.

"We hoped to begin academic activities but the unreleased of money has made things complicated for us," said CSTU Vice-Chancellor Nasim Akhtar.

The alleged deception was unearthed by the Chandpur district administration which found that 63.549 acres of land in Laxmipur Mouza no-115, selected for the university, were heavily overpriced.

The Chandpur Deputy Commissioner's office began the CSTU land acquisition in May 2021.

The DC office estimates that at the artificially hiked rate, the government would have to pay about Tk 553 crore when the actual price of the land is about Tk 193.90 crore.

In an order on November 4, the Chandpur DC office had asked the university authorities to release about Tk 193.90 crore as compensation for land acquisition by 120 working days.

"If the estimated money is not deposited by the said time, the land acquisition case will be cancelled automatically," reads the order.

Talking to the Daily Star, Chandpur Deputy Commissioner Anjana Khan Mojilish said they did not get the estimated compensation.

Asked whether the acquisition will be cancelled, she said they are waiting for a decision from the High Court as a writ is pending.

Challenging the DC office's estimation, Selim Khan and others filed petitions before the High Court which after a hearing fixed April 20 for order.

However, no order was passed.

MINISTRY'S RESPONSE

Belayet Hossain Talukdar, additional secretary (development) of secondary and higher education division (SHED) at the education ministry, said they did not release money as the university authorities failed to produce a Development Project Proposal (DPP) for the land acquisition.

"For some technical issue, we could not release money. The university should approach in a planned way. We will not give money for land in an isolated way," he said, adding that the VC could have taken their support for preparing DPP.

On the other hand, CSTU VC said the land ministry got approval from the Prime Minister's Office to transfer the ownership of the proposed land to the SHED last July and the land acquisition was awaiting fund release.

"The land acquisition process was in an advanced stage. What was the necessity of DPP?" he said.
