

BAPL starts work on Andal masterplan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Fervently hoping that the state would soon iron out the freshly developed creases in the aerotropolis project, BAPL (Bengal Aerotropolis Private Ltd) has started drawing up the masterplan for the project.

Officials from the Hong Kong-based Townland Consultants are currently in the city to work on the detailed master-plan for the aviation-related enterprises (hotels, business parks and township) around the proposed 600-acre airport at Andal in Burdwan. A three-member team comprising director Richard J Durack, master planner Steven Michiel Beunder and town planner Veronique Dryden met BAPL officials, intending to complete the master-plan six months from now.

WBIDC would have handed over a token 551 acres for the project site this month and BAPL paid the first instalment (land price). All of the 2200 acres needed for the first phase is scheduled to be handed over by the year-end.

The prospects appeared a little uncertain recently as the government broke the news about hidden costs which took the company that has Changi Airports as its FDI partner off guard. Not ready to be daunted by yet another hiccup (Coal India's objections earlier this year had led to realignment of the



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project area), BAPL is determined to doing its own bit for the project planning.

Officials of Townland are upbeat as this airport-township would be the biggest they would have handled in India and "by far the greenest". Said Durack, "The township, given it's span and the psyche of the people living in that area, will be green and very open. Around 50 acres will be dedicated for a central park." About two-thirds of the project area will be reserved for industrial and commercial use, including an IT park.

Beunder said: "Matching the semi-rural set-up, the township will be low-rise — very different from Rajarhat that caters to high-end clientele. The project time span is 10 years, so the master-plan will have to be revisited. The framework will remain same, though." A dozen schools, hospitals, hotels and buses for inter-commuting are on the cards.