

Bengal Aerotropolis project gets first tranche of land

Construction is expected to start by March next

Special Correspondent

KOLKATA: Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL), which will be setting up the country's first greenfield merchant airport near Durgapur in West Bengal, has got the first tranche of land of 533.5 acres.

The project, which had hit hurdles following objections raised by Coal India Ltd (CIL) over the issue of its coal deposits getting blocked by the proposed airport city, now expected to start construction by March 2010 and become operational by September 2011, Arvind Pande, Chairman, BAPL, said.

CIL sources said that the project size had been re-

• **Project size has been reworked**

• **Signs 99-year lease with WBIDC**

worked to protect most of the licence areas of Eastern Coalfields Ltd., a subsidiary of CIL.

However, concerns regarding the project locking up coal deposits allotted to other companies remain. While coal deposits spread over 2.63 km was getting locked up now, keeping in mind the interest of only coal which is extractable in the near future, some amount has been sacri-

ficed it was learnt. The 99-year lease agreement was signed between BAPL and West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC), a release said adding that the integrated project was spread over about 2,300 acres and the acquisition of remaining land was expected to be over in the next few months.

Changi Airports International has picked up 26 per cent equity in BAPL which is its first investment in India, the release said. Mr. Pande said the project had already received clearance from the Civil Aviation Ministry and had attained financial closure.