

US SANCTIONS THREAT

Iran drops India from rail project

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Iran has reportedly dropped India from a key rail project along the border with Afghanistan after New Delhi showed reluctance in joining the project due to US sanctions, according to a report by an Indian newspaper.

The Iranian government decided to proceed with the long-stalled project without India's participation, citing delays in funding and starting the project, English language daily The Hindu reported on Tuesday.

The project, which is scheduled to be completed by March 2022, has started with about \$400m funding from the Iranian government, the paper reported.

"It was expected that in addition to the investment in Chabahar Port, India could also play a more crucial role ... in the absence of an active Indian engagement and partnership, [the port is] currently under construction by Iranian funding and engineering capacities," the Hindu reported quoting Iranian sources.

The deal to construct 628-km railway line from the port city of Chabahar to Zahedan province was part of a series of bilateral agreements signed between India and Iran in May 2016. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of a 2016 trilateral agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan to develop a transport and trade corridor from India to Afghanistan through the Chabahar port in southeast Iran.

Indian consultancy IIRCON had pledged to provide all services and funding for the project, estimated at approximately \$1.6bn, according to the Hindu report. However, the project failed to take off - despite many visits by IIRCON engineers and arrangements made by the Iranian side - owing to the pressure of US sanctions, sources both in India and Iran said.



Police use water cannons as they clash with people during a protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's response to the financial fallout of the coronavirus disease crisis outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence in Jerusalem, early yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Methane emissions on the rise

Emissions of methane -- a planet-warming gas several times more potent than carbon dioxide -- have risen by nine percent in a decade driven by mankind's insatiable hunger for energy and food, a major international study concluded Wednesday. Methane (CH4) has a warming potential 28 times greater than CO2 over a 100-year period and its concentration in the atmosphere has more than doubled since the Industrial Revolution. While there are a number of natural methane sources such as wetlands and lakes, the team behind the study concluded that 60 percent of CH4 emissions are now manmade. The world now produces around 50 million additional tonnes of methane every year than it did between 2000-2006. Around 60 percent of manmade CH4 emissions were estimated to come from agriculture and waste, including as much as 30 percent from the digestive processes of cattle and sheep. Twenty-two percent comes from the extraction and burning of oil and gas, while 11 percent leaks from the world's coal mines, the study found.

Qatar wins ICJ support

The UN's top court on Tuesday backed Qatar in a bitter row with four Middle East nations that imposed an air blockade against Doha in 2017 after accusing it of backing radical Islamists and Iran. The decision by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) covers a key part of the acrimonious standoff that erupted three years ago pitting Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates against Qatar. The president of the ICJ, Abdulgawad Ahmed Yusuf said The Hague-based court unanimously "rejects the appeal" by the rival states against a decision by the world civil aviation body in favour of Qatar over sovereign airspace. The court also "holds that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has jurisdiction" in the case, by 15 judges to one, Yusuf said.

Indonesia flash floods kill 16



Flash floods and landslides have killed at least 16 people and displaced hundreds in a district on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, officials at the country's disaster mitigation agency said yesterday. Search and rescue officials were still looking for 23 people missing after the floods struck the North Luwu district of South Sulawesi province, said Raditya Jati, a spokesman for the national disaster mitigation agency. Heavy rains had inundated three nearby rivers for several days prompting the evacuation of 655 people due to the floods, officials at the local disaster mitigation agency and search and rescue agency told Reuters. Indonesia frequently suffers from floods and landslides particularly during the rainy season, though the situation is often made worse by the cutting down of forests.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

8.8b people in 2100!

Study says world population could be 2 billion below UN projections

AGENCIES

Earth will be home to 8.8 billion souls in 2100, two billion fewer than current UN projections, according to a major study published yesterday that foresees new global power alignments shaped by declining fertility rates and greying populations.

By century's end, 183 of 195 countries -- barring an influx of immigrants -- will have fallen below the replacement threshold needed to maintain population levels, an international team of researchers reported in The Lancet.

More than 20 countries -- including Japan, Spain, Italy, Thailand, Portugal, South Korea and Poland -- will see their numbers diminish by at least half. China's will fall nearly that much, from 1.4 billion people today to 730 million in 80 years.

Sub-Saharan Africa, meanwhile, will triple in size to some three billion people, with Nigeria alone expanding to almost 800 million in 2100, second only to India's 1.1 billion.

"These forecasts suggest good news for the environment, with less stress on food production systems and lower carbon emissions," lead author Christopher Murray, director of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, told AFP.

Social services and healthcare systems will need to be overhauled to accommodate much older populations. 2.37 billion people -- more than a quarter of the global population -- will be over 65 years old by then. Those over 80 will balloon from about 140 million today to 866 million.

Covid could set world back for yrs

Warns UN chief; fresh lockdowns as cases surge across the world

AGENCIES

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned the coronavirus pandemic might set the world back "years and even decades" in terms of economic progress as millions of people faced new coronavirus restrictions yesterday.

"We are experiencing the sharpest decline in per capita income since 1870," he said, adding that "between 70 and 100 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty."

He also warned that "some 265 million people could face acute food insecurity" by the end of the year.

Guterres called for an "inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism" to deal with the crisis.

Countries around the world re-imposed lockdowns and curbs to contain new outbreaks, as global cases surged past 13.2 million with more than 576,000 deaths.

Parts of the Asia-Pacific region, which had been somewhat successful

in fighting the pandemic, provided fresh evidence of the deadly threat still posed by the virus.

Hong Kong's bars, gyms, and beauty salons closed again yesterday and a ban on gatherings with more than four people came into force as the city battled a fresh outbreak after months of impressive success against the virus.

Most of the city's residents voluntarily adopted facemasks as a barrier against the virus when it was first detected in mainland China late last year, but the Hong Kong government now requires passengers on public transport to wear them or risk a US\$650 fine.

There was alarm in Japan too, where Tokyo's governor warned that the capital was on its highest coronavirus alert level after a spike in infections. That came after the Indian state of Bihar, with a population of around 125 million, announced a 15-day virus lockdown starting today. India's IT hub Bangalore has already started a

week-long lockdown.

Authorities in Australia, meanwhile, yesterday pleaded with the public to heed social distancing guidelines, with roughly five million people in Melbourne in lockdown since last week in a bid to contain a new outbreak.

Such pleas from experts and authorities have been ignored and even mocked in many of the world's most populous parts, including the United States -- the worst-hit nation in the world.

Tens of thousands of cases are now being reported every day in the US as authorities scramble to roll back reopenings. The national 24-hour infection count was more than 63,000 on Tuesday, according to a Johns Hopkins University tracker.

Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious disease expert, again warned Americans against carelessness -- especially young people who may feel they are not vulnerable and would rather be "sipping my margarita at a bar in a crowd".

US calls China the new East India Company

AFP, Washington

A senior US official on Tuesday likened China's state enterprises to Britain's colonizing East India Company as Washington takes a tougher stance against Beijing in the dispute-rife South China Sea.

A day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo branded most of Beijing's claims in the sea illegal, his top aide for East Asia denounced a proliferation of rigs, survey ships and fishing boats sent by Chinese state-run companies.

Assistant Secretary of State David Stilwell said that oil major CNOOC and other firms were serving as "battering rams" to intimidate other nations.

"In all our societies, citizens deserve to know the differences between commercial enterprises and instruments of foreign state power," Stilwell said at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"These state enterprises are modern-day equivalents of the East India Company," he said.

The British East India Company seized control of most of the Indian subcontinent in the guise of trading in tea, cotton, spices and other goods before Britain formally took charge in the mid-19th century.

The reference is especially loaded due to the East India Company's role in smuggling opium into China, culminating in Britain's 1843 colonization of Hong Kong -- the start of what Beijing calls a century of humiliation.

China has recently triggered international outrage by clamping down on freedoms promised to Hong Kong before Britain handed back the financial hub in 1997.

Four BRTC bus drivers

FROM PAGE 12

fabricated interviews" to an electronic media on salaries, allowances and other issues without taking permission from the authorities. This tarnished the corporation's image among the people.

"So, they have been suspended from July 1 under section 45 (1) of the BRTC Employment Regulation-1990. During the suspension period, they will ensure their presence at the depot on every working day. The drivers will get "khoraki" (partial salary) during the same period," reads the order.

The section 45 (1) of the regulation deals with suspension of employees.

Speaking to this correspondent, one of the suspended drivers said, "We didn't say anything false or fabricated about the BRTC in the interview. We just talked about our arrears and sought the prime minister's intervention in this regard.

"We said that many of us were working to transport [suspected] coronavirus patients from the airport to Hajj Camp [isolation centre]. There are eight-month arrears of our salaries. Is asking for arrears our fault?" he said wishing anonymity for fear of further reprisal.

Another driver said two of them talked to the media while the two others were standing beside them. But the two others were also suspended for "talking to the media".

"Before the issuance of the suspension order, two of us were transferred from the Joar Sahara depot on June 2 without any reason mentioned. We think the transfer order was linked to the interviews," the driver added.

"We had eight-month arrears when we talked to the media. It has now gone up to 10 months. The situation is similar in many depots," he said.

He expressed worries over passing his days with a "partial salary" amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Drivers said they earn Tk 22,000 to Tk 23,000 each a month. Following the suspension, they will now get around half the amount.

Some 3,000 BRTC employees, including drivers, get salaries and other benefits like that of a government employee. But under the current system, the salaries and benefits of a depot employee has to be paid from the earnings of that particular depot.

Apart from operating buses by itself, the corporation also earns by leasing out buses to private entities and organisations, including educational institutions.

BRTC officials said the depots have been struggling to pay the employees after the government implemented a new pay scale in 2016. Although the salary of

the depot staffers increased, their income did not grow.

Staffers, however, alleged that corruption by some BRTC officials, including those running depots, was causing sufferings to them.

Expressing anger and frustration by BRTC depot workers over their unpaid salaries is nothing new. Last year, workers of different depots staged demonstrations demanding payment of their arrears.

On July 22 last year, staffers and drivers of the 22 BRTC depots confined their then chairman to the corporation's head office in the capital over unpaid salaries. Amid such a situation, the government replaced the then chairman with the current one.

Taking charge in August last year, Ehsan-E-Elahi had pledged to clear the arrears.

But drivers at different depots said although they receive salaries of running months, their long pending arrears are yet to be cleared. They said they were yet to get the salaries of the last two months.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach Ehsan-E-Elahi over the phone for comments.

BRTC spokesperson Amzad Hossain said the four driver were suspended for giving "false information" to an electronic media outlet and not taking permission for giving the interview.

"It can be assumed from their statement to the media that they did not get salaries of last month. This is a false statement. They received salaries regularly after the new chairman took over [in August last year]," Amzad told The Daily Star yesterday.

Admitting that there were arrears of drivers' salaries of several months, he said those became due long ago.

He, however, said they were trying to pay the last two month's salaries very soon.

Rights activist Nur Khan Lition said the BRTC's suspension order is "an attempt to curb people's freedom of speech" which has been ensured in the country's constitution

He said a driver or a staffer has the right to talk to the media for drawing the attention of his higher authorities if he did not get his salaries.

"Talking to the media can't be an offence," he told this newspaper yesterday.

Till February this year, the BRTC owned 1,873 buses, including 600 new ones. Of them, 1,357 were in service on 384 routes across the country.

The corporation added 1,100 new vehicles -- 600 buses and 500 trucks -- to its fleet last year.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
"অধিকসংখ্যক শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তির সুযোগ সৃষ্টির লক্ষ্যে বিদ্যমান পলিটেকনিক ইন্সটিটিউটসমূহের অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন" প্রকল্প
কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর,
এফ ৪/বি, আগারগাঁও প্রশাসনিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ৫৭/০৩.০০০০.০০৯.১১.০০৪.২০১৮-০৭৭
তার-১৪/০৭/২০২০ খ্রি:।
Outsourcing পদ্ধতিতে জনবল নিয়োগের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
১. মন্ত্রণালয় / বিভাগ : কারিগরি ও মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়।
২. সংস্থা : কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর।
৩. অফিসের নাম : প্রকল্প পরিচালকের কার্যালয় "অধিকসংখ্যক শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তির সুযোগ সৃষ্টির লক্ষ্যে বিদ্যমান পলিটেকনিক ইন্সটিটিউটসমূহের অবকাঠামো উন্নয়ন" প্রকল্প, কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা।
৪. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী : সানসুর হামান খান প্রকল্প পরিচালক (উপসচিব)।
৫. বাজেটের উৎস : ট্রান্স-রাজস্ব (GoB)।
৬. কাজের বিবরণ : অর্ডারসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে ০২ জন ড্রাইভার এবং ০২ অফিস সহায়ক নিয়োগ।
৭. সারসংক্ষেপ : উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (Open Tendering Method)।
৮. দরপত্র সিদ্ধিতির মূল্য : প্রতি সেট ৫০০/- (পাঁচশ) টাকার টেন্ডারী চলান কোড নম্বর ১-২৫৫৩-০০০০-২৩৬৬ এ অন্য দ্বিগুণ মূল্য বশিষ্ঠ এর মাধ্যমে সিদ্ধিতির সময়ে করতে হবে।
৯. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী : ২০০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকা, পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিদ্ধিতির সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
১০. দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী : ক) দরদাতাকে বাংলাদেশী বেসরকারী জনবল সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে হবে, অনুজ্ঞাপত্র হালদালাস প্রদানপত্র থাকতে হবে, হালদালাস আয়কর-স্ট্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে, অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন এবং য্যাক কর্তৃক আর্থিক স্বাচ্ছন্দতার সনদ থাকতে হবে। খ) প্রকল্পের প্রকাশের পূর্বে দরদাতাকে কমপক্ষে ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের সরকারী/ অধা-সরকারী রায়ীদার প্রতিষ্ঠানের অধীন জনবল সরবরাহের একক কার্যালয়ে এর ক্ষেত্রে ১৫,০০০০০/- (পনের লক্ষ) টাকার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। গ) টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টে বর্ণিত আর্থিক পদ্ধতি টার্নওভার এবং লিভুইটিটি এসেট থাকতে হবে। ঘ) দরপত্রের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী মননে হবে।
১১. দরপত্র পত্রিকা প্রকাশের তারিখ : ১৫/০৭/২০২০ খ্রি:।
১২. দরপত্র সিদ্ধিতির তারিখের স্থান : ডাক নং-৪১০, কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
১৩. দরপত্র সিদ্ধিতির তারিখের স্থান : ডাক নং-৪১০, কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭।
১৪. দরপত্র সিদ্ধিতির তারিখের শেষ সময় : ২৪/০৭/২০২০ খ্রি: তারিখ অফিস সন্ধ্যাকালীন সময়।
১৫. দরপত্র সিদ্ধিতির তারিখের শেষ সময় : ২৯/০৭/২০২০ খ্রি: তারিখ, বেলা-১.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৬. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় : ২৯/০৭/২০২০ খ্রি: তারিখ, বেলা-২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৭. দরপত্রের বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী : ১. বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী প্রাথমিকভাবে সরবরাহকৃত কার্যকাল হবে যোগদানের তারিখ হতে ১০ (দশ) মাস। সন্ধ্যাকালীন কাজের ডিভিডেন্ডে টাকার মেয়াদ প্রকল্প মেয়াদকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত বৃদ্ধি করা যাবে। ২. টেন্ডার ইনকম্প্লিশন ফরম PSN-2 খাতিয়াভাবে পূরণপূর্বক দাখিল করতে হবে। ৩. PSN-3 (পূর্ণকভাবে প্রত্যেক প্রার্থীর CV) খাতিয়াভাবে পূর্ণ পূর্বক দাখিল করতে হবে। ৪. (Joint Venture) JV প্রার্থী দাখিলকৃত দরপত্র ননসেম্পলশন বলে বিবেচিত হবে। ৫. জনবলের রেজুমেশন সরকারী সার্ভুলার অনুযায়ী নির্ধারিত হবে এবং প্রবেশ্য ক্ষেত্রে ডাটাবেসের মাধ্যমে হবে। টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টে সিদ্ধিতির সেকশন ৬: এ উদ্ধৃতি অনুযায়ী শুল্কের কমিশন (প্রকিট, ওভারহেড, এনাইটি ইত্যাদি) quote করতে হবে। এই আর্থিক প্রস্তাবটি পূর্বক যামে দাখিল করতে হবে। ৬. দরপত্র দাতার কোটেশন রেট TDS এবং সেকশন -৬ এর এনাইটিটি স্পেসিফিক সিদ্ধিতির টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টে উদ্ধৃত ২২.৭ এ বর্ণিত প্রেসেডারের কম হলে তা দাখিল বদে পদ্য হবে। (Tenderer's quoting rate of service commission of the tender less the specific threshold specified in TDS & Section 6: Activity schedule of the Tender Document as stated under ITT Sub 22.7, shall be rejected).