Under Russia, isolated Crimea is twilight zone for business

AFP, *Simferopol*

Circling her thumb and index finger to make a zero, Tatyana Chernetskaya sums up how many clients her Crimean firm has one year after Russia took over the peninsula: "None."

While many supporters of annexation of the Black Sea province from Ukraine expected to be better off under Moscow's rule, business in Crimea is strangled by economic isolation, Western sanctions, and local authorities nationalising key Ukrainian firms.

Chernetskaya's firm, which produces accounting software, has had to fire most of the 55-strong staff, leaving just five. They lost over 3,000 clients in mainland Ukraine after telephone and banking communications were cut in the wake of Russia's annexation.

And the few local clients were pressured by the new Russian authorities to dump her software and switch to a Russian-made programme.

In the company's office, Ukrainian certificates still hang on walls and boxes packed with obsolete paperwork await disposal by the front door.

She voted to join Russia in the referendum held in Crimea last March and has a portrait of Russian President Vladimir Putin hanging in her office.

Her "very typical" hardships are the fault of corrupt local officials and "senseless" Western sanctions, not the Kremlin, she insists, even if she describes the transition to Russian tax and labour laws as overwhelming.

"It's as if I fled as a refugee to a new country and have to start my life from scratch," she said. "There is a feeling that you are in some sort of nowhere-land. You've been left behind in that previous life, while here you have nothing."

AFP/FILE

A man plays a saxophone as people wave Russian and Crimean flags while walking to a pro-Russia rally in Simferopol's Lenin Square.

Many people on the peninsula who voted to join Russia last year were lured by the prospects of better economic opportunities.

But Ukraine has cut most transport and communications links, while Western sanctions ban investment and restrict work of US and European companies. Visa and Mastercard do not work and it's difficult to exchange currency.

All this scares even major Russian firms from operating in Crimea.

The resulting economy is cash-based, with erratic supplies from Russia's southern Krasnodar region, with which Crimea shares an unreliable ferry link over the Kerch Strait.

Shortages are manifest in thinly-stocked local supermarkets, where many shelves just have a single row of identical goods, reminiscent of the Soviet era.

The separation of Crimea from Ukraine has dealt a devastating blow to the photogenic region's once-booming tourism industry, with tourist numbers dropping from 5.9 million in 2013 to 3.8 million in 2014, despite Russia's efforts to subsidise package tours.

Ukrainians, who previously made up over 65 percent of tourists, did not come to Crimea's beaches last summer, said Yelena Attestatova, who runs a travel agency.

International cruise ships also stayed away, leaving Russians as about the only customers.

"We are waiting for things to normalise," Attestatova said. "What else is there to do?"

Western sanctions have led to the closure of McDonalds fast-food outlets and Shell gas stations, and pushed workers dependent on global companies to relocate.

"I couldn't figure out why I must suffer and look for ways to circumvent (the sanctions) if I can easily work somewhere else," said Pavel Berman, a Russian who came to Crimea last spring to develop an IT business but who became disillusioned and recently went back home to Saint Petersburg.

"Nobody expected this isolation," he told AFP by phone, complaining that eBay, PayPal, Google and Apple are blocked in Crimea.

"You can get around these bans through VPNs, but each time it takes more time," he said.

Aside from the struggles of small business, large Ukrainian-owned companies have undergone so-called "nationalisation" after being raided by local paramilitary units, most recently telephone and power providers Ukrtelekom and Krymenergo.

This month the armed men -- who last year helped take over government buildings and army bases and were never disbanded -- came to Massandra, the iconic Crimean wine producer which has operated since the tsarist era and was last year put under control of the Kremlin's property management office.

In a letter to Putin this month, the company said its operations and staff of 2,500 are at risk due to "utter incompetency and unquenchable profiteering" of the new owners and the Crimean authorities, who are pressuring the company to cede valuable coastal land where its vineyards are located.

"When we voted for returning Crimea to Russia..., we could not have imagined such consequences in our worst nightmares," said the letter, posted on Ukrainian websites.

Reached by phone, Massandra director Nikolai Boiko said the ordeals have caused him so much stress that he is in hospital with heart problems.

Meanwhile Chernetskaya, the owner of the software firm, said she has taken up painting as a new source of income and is thinking of emigrating to Poland since one of her grandfathers executed under Stalin had Polish roots.

Her portrait of Putin gazes over application forms and Polish language-teaching CDs strewn on her desk.

Sri Lanka inflation hits 11-year low

AFP, *Colombo*

Sri Lanka's inflation hit an 11-year low in February on the back of drastic price reductions ordered by the new government, official figures showed Friday.

The Colombo Consumer Price Index, the main measure of inflation in the island, increased by 0.6 percent in February, down from 3.2 percent in January and 4.2 percent a year ago.

The previous low of 0.5 percent was recorded in January 2004.

The new government of President Maithripala Sirisena, who came to power in January, reduced prices of essential food and sharply cut energy prices in line with an electoral pledge.

Deputy Economic Development Minister Harsha de Silva told reporters earlier this week that the government expects inflation to remain low in Sri Lanka this year in line with a global trend.

However, the government is also looking to a $4.0 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund as it restructures expensive loans taken by the previous government.

The IMF has forecast a growth rate of 6.5 percent for Sri Lanka this year, below the government's target of 7.0 percent.

Ericsson sues Apple over patent violations

AFP, *Stockholm*

Swedish telecoms group Ericsson announced Friday a lawsuit against Apple claiming that the US tech giant continued to use its technology in iPhones and other wireless devices after refusing to renew a licencing agreement.

"Apple currently uses our technology without a license and therefore we are seeking help from the court and the ITC (International Trade Commission)," Ericsson's head of intellectual property, Kasim Alfalahi, said in a statement.

"Features that consumers now take for granted -- like being able to livestream television shows or access their favourite apps from their phone -- rely on the technology we have developed," he added.

Ericsson said it has filed two complaints to the ITC and seven more to a court in Texas after Apple rejected an offer from Ericsson to "have a court determine fair licensing terms."

The Swedish company was also seeking a marketing ban for Apple products that use the patents, which relate to second and fourth generation LTE mobile wireless technology.

Apple in turn had filed a legal complaint in January against Ericsson, claiming the patents were not up to industry standards and that the Swedish group had asked for excessive royalties for them in its licencing renewal offer.

MRDI

Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, hands over a cheque to Hasibur Rahman, executive director of MRDI, at a programme in Dhaka recently to implement the initiatives for rehabilitation of Birangonas as part of a CSR advocacy programme under the central bank's disaster management and social responsibility fund.

Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)
Chittagong, Bangladesh

জ্বালানি নিরাপত্তা সর্বোচ্চ অগ্রাধিকার

Invitation for International Tender

01.	Ministry/Division	:	Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/Energy & Mineral Resources Division.	
02.	Agency	:	Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla).	
03.	Procuring entity name	:	Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited.	
04.	Procuring entity district	:	Chittagong.	
05.	Invitation for	:	Procurement of Black Tape and White Tape.	
06.	Invitation Ref. No.	:	28.15.0000.111.06.001.15-01.	
07.	Date	:	25.02.2015.	
KEY INFORMATION				
08.	Procurement method	:	Open Tendering Method (Single Stage-double envelope tendering method).	
09.	Budget and source of funds	:	KGDCL own fund, cash foreign exchange resource.	
10.	Time limit to selling tender document	:	04.03.2015 to 16.04.2015 (During office hour).	
11.	Tender last selling date	:	16.04.2015.	
			Date	Time
12.	Tender closing date & time	:	19.04.2015	1130 hrs (BST)
13.	Tender opening date & time	:	19.04.2015	1145 hrs (BST)
14.	Name & address of the office(s) - Selling tender documents		Tender documents will be available in the following KGDCL offices during office hour. a) Finance & Accounts Department, Head Office, 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong, Bangladesh. b) Dhaka Liaison Office, Petrobangla, Petrocentre (13th Floor), 3, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh.	
15.	Receiving tender document	:	Purchase Department, Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited, Head Office: 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong, Bangladesh.	
16.	Opening tender document	:	Purchase Department, Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited, Head Office: 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong, Bangladesh.	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
17.	Eligibility of tenderer	:	Tenderer must have at least 05 (five) years overseas track records/supply records for similar type of materials. The supply records must be supported with 03 (three) copies of Purchase Order/Contract of the last 05 (five) years giving customer detailed address with telephone number, fax number & e-mail number. The related evidences must be submitted along with the tender.	
18.	Brief description of goods	:	Black Tape (25 milsx2"x200') White Tape (30 milsx2"x200')	
19.	Price of tender document	:	US$ 50.00 or BDT 4,000.00 (non-refundable).	
20.	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Tender security amount	Time for completion of delivery
	Single	Black Tape and White Tape	US$ 3,500.00 or BDT 2,75,000.00	60 (sixty) days from the date of receipt of letter of credit
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
21.	Designation of official inviting tender	:	Deputy General Manager (Purchase).	
22.	Contact details of official inviting tender	:	Deputy General Manager (Purchase), Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited, Head Office: 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong, Bangladesh, Tel: 031-2557460, Fax: 088-031-656090.	
23.	Special instruction	:	a) Tender must remain valid for 120 days after the date of tender submission. b) Due to unavoidable circumstances if the tender cannot be opened in the scheduled date, tender will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.	
24.	The tender will be conducted and interpreted as per the Public Procurement Regulations-2008.			
25.	KGDCL reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.			GD-818

The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd
Gazipur
Website: www.spcbl.org.bd

Local/International Tender for Supply of 3500 Rolls Plain Paper Having One Sided Water Remoistable Gum for Cheque Book Finishing Machine

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the competent local/international manufacturers/suppliers for supply of above materials as per under noted schedule. Tender documents showing terms and conditions with specification will be available from the office of The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd, Gazipur and its Liaison Office at Annex Building-1, 6th Floor, Bangladesh Bank, Dhaka-1000 during Sunday to Thursday between 10.00am to 4:00pm against an application in the letterhead pad from the respective firm against payment of 400.00 taka (four hundred).

1. Selling of tender document: From 01-03-2015 to 25-03-2015
2. Last date and time for submission of tender: 05-04-2015 up to 3:30pm.
3. Date & time for opening of tender: 06-04-2015 at 11:00am.

Earnest money @ 3% (three percent) of the total quoted price shall have to be submitted in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Irrevocable Bank Guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh. Irrevocable Bank Guarantee may also be given from any international commercial bank abroad with a counter guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh along with the tender in favour of the Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd, Gazipur. Tender(s) without earnest money shall not be acceptable. Besides, bidder may collect the tender schedule from the Corporation website. In this case bidder needs to pay the price of the tender schedule to any one of the two aforementioned stations and collect receipt or a cheque/pay-order/DD amounting of the aforesaid value shall be attached with the tender (tender will be acceptable after encashment). The tender(s) under sealed cover addressed to the Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd, Gazipur shall have to be dropped in the tender box kept at Corporation's Office in Gazipur and its above addressed liaison office but all the tenders to be received shall be opened together in Gazipur office as per schedule mentioned above in presence of tenderer(s) if any. Tender may be sent also through postal/courier services which must be reached within the scheduled deadline. One tenderer can offer more than one alternative offer(s); in that case separate tender schedule (original) & separate earnest money shall have to be submitted for each alternative offer(s). The authority reserves the right to reject or accept any tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of tender after the specified time shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.

Md Kalimulla
General Manager (P&S)
Phone: 9205116

GD-830

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Development Board
Central Secretariat, WAPDA Building (1st Floor)
Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, Tel: 880-2-9554209

Tender of Pre-Payment Metering Project for Distribution Southern Zone, Chittagong (Phase-1)

Invitation for International Tenders

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/Power Division.
2.	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).
3.	Invitation for	Tender of Pre-Payment Metering Project for Distribution Southern Zone, Chittagong (Phase-1) under Package-3.
4.	Procurement method	Single stage two envelope.
5.	Source of fund	GOB.
6.	Invitation for tenders Ref. & date	Memo No. 462-BPDB(Sectt)/Dev-182/2007, Date: 25/02/2015.
7.	Date of start of selling of tender document	04.03.2015.
8.	Tender name	Design, manufacture, supply, installation, testing & commissioning of pre-paid meters with related services on turnkey basis.
9.	Time for completion of commissioning from the effective date of contract	540 days.
10.	Eligibility of tenderers	As per tender document.
11.	Price of tender document	Tk 15,000.00 (fifteen thousand) only payable in the form of Pay Order/Demand Draft in favour of the Director, Purchase, BPDB, Dhaka for each set of tender document.
12.	Amount of tender security	BDT 35,00,000.00 (in word: Taka thirty-five lac) only or USD 45,000.00 (in word: US dollar forty-five thousand).
13.	Validity of tender and tender security	120 (one hundred twenty) days and 148 (one hundred forty-eight) days respectively from the date of opening of tender.
14.	Name and address of the office for selling the tender document	Director of Purchase, Bangladesh Power Development Board, WAPDA Building (9th Floor), Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
15.	Name and address of the office for receiving and opening of tender	Secretary, Bangladesh Power Development Board, WAPDA Building (1st Floor), Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
16.	Last date and time for selling the tender document	Date: 15/04/2015 Time: 17:00 BST.
17.	Last date and time for submission of tenders	Date: 16/04/2015 Time: 10:30 BST.
18.	Date and time for opening of tenders	The tenders shall be opened at 11:00 hours BST, 16/04/2015. Tenderers and their authorised representatives are allowed to attend.
19.	Place & date of pre-tender meeting	"Bijoy Hall", Level-15, Biddyut Bhaban, BPDB, Dhaka. Time & date will 22.03.2015 at 10:00am BST.
20.	Special instructions	Tender documents will be posted in the BPDB website: http://www.bpdb.gov.bd The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any/all tenders prior to acceptance without assigning any reason whatsoever. Tenders submitted by fax, telex, swift, cable, e-mail & by post/courier shall not be accepted.
21.	Name of official inviting the tender	Md. Zahurul Haque.
22.	Designation and address of inviting the tender	Secretary, Bangladesh Power Development Board, WAPDA Building (1st Floor), Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Tel: 9554209, 9567350, Fax: 880-2-9564765.

Secretary
Bangladesh Power Development Board
WAPDA Building (1st Floor)
Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Fax: 880-2-9564765

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