

Canada's Indo-Pacific trade representative arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Canada's Indo-Pacific Trade Representative, Paul Thoppil, will arrive in Bangladesh on a three-day visit beginning today to promote Canada's commitment to the region through its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS).

During his visit, he will meet with officials and key partners and try identifying ways to expand and diversify trade between Canada and Bangladesh and explore how the two countries can work together to foster two-way investment, according to the Canadian High Commission in Dhaka.

The bilateral trade between the two countries is about \$3.5 billion and continues to grow. The Bangladeshi-Canadian community is estimated at over 100,000 and continues to make significant contributions to Canadian prosperity and to the multi-cultural fabric of Canada.

The Indo-Pacific region is home to more than half the world's population, and it accounts for 60 percent of global GDP as well as two-thirds of global economic growth.

PRAYER
TIMING

MAY 19

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-36 8-00
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 6-40 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SIX UPAZILAS IN BAGERHAT

Water crisis grips coastal areas

1,326 out of 2,799 pond sand filters out of order

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

The residents of six coastal upazilas under Bagerhat district are grappling with an acute crisis for fresh water for domestic consumption since the onset of dry season.

There is a dire lack of fresh water from the local sources including ponds amid the dry spell in Sadar, Rampal, Mongla, Morrelganj, Sarankhola and Kachua upazilas, said locals.

There are no deep tube wells in Kachua, Morrelganj, Sarankhola, and Mongla upazilas due to salinity and depleted groundwater levels, they also said.

In addition, approximately half of the pond sand filters (PSFs) installed in the six upazilas are out of order, making the situation worse.

Therefore, health risks from water-borne diseases have arisen among the residents as they are being compelled to consume untreated pond water.

PSF is a manually operated treatment unit, based on the principle of slow sand filtration. Water is pumped up from the pond by a handpump and is poured into a small concrete tank, having more compartments, of which one is the filter chamber filled with the sand.

According to the Directorate of Public Health Engineering, the directorate alongside different voluntary organisations installed a total of 2,799 PSFs in the upazilas since 1992-93.

Of those, at least 1,326 are unusable at present.

In the last five years, 42 PSFs were installed for Tk 22 lakh and 155 solar PSFs for Tk 9.5 crore. Also, 36,550 rainwater harvesting tanks were distributed among people in the district for Tk 146.2 crore.

"We harvest rainwater during the monsoon



According to the Directorate of Public Health Engineering, the directorate alongside different voluntary organisations installed 2,799 PSFs in the upazilas since 1992-93. Of those, at least 1,326 are unusable at present.

PHOTO: STAR

for drinking and cooking without much problem. However, during the dry season, we experience an acute water crisis, especially with the PSFs in the area being out of order. We are now compelled to use untreated pond water for consumption and it causes numerous health complications including diarrhoea, vomiting and abdominal pain," said Pabitra Das from Sangdia village in Kachua.

Dilip Das of the same village, said, "Since we are surrounded by saline water in the coastal areas, ponds are our main source of fresh water. There is a ban on fish farming in the area's ponds, but it is still being done secretly, which is deteriorating the quality of water."

Paritosh Das and Malati Das from Sangdia

village echoed the same.

Locals urged the authorities concerned to repair the PSFs and provide sufficient number of tanks for storing rainwater among the residents.

Nakib Foyzal Ohid, chairman of Badhal Union Parishad, said, "The PSFs in Abad, Panbaria, Raghudotokanthi areas under my union are in urgent need of repairs to ease the ongoing water crisis."

Contacted, Jayanta Mallik, executive engineer of Public Health Engineering Department in Bagerhat, said distribution of tanks for harvesting rainwater is continuing in the coastal upazilas to keep the situation under control.

"Besides, we are installing deep tube wells in many areas... We are working to repair the PSFs, while also supplying water to the residents through water purifying trucks," he added.



War Graves Week observed in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), the operating concern of two war cemeteries in Bangladesh, organised an event on the occasion of "War Graves Week 2024" at Chittagong War Cemetery yesterday.

The CWGC has been observing the event as part of global awareness on its work and role to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the two world wars.

Sixty students from BAF Shaheen College Chattogram attended this awareness event.

Hilol Sattar, country manager for CWGC, Bangladesh, delivered a speech on the work of CWGC.

War Graves Week is the CWGC's annual awareness initiative. This year's theme is Discover, Learn and Remember, he said.

FARIDPUR-MAGURA

BR to extend rail line to Jhenaidah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway is planning to extend the under construction Faridpur-Magura rail line to Jhenaidah to connect it with the existing rail network.

The chief engineer's office of BR (west zone) has already formed a committee to assess the proposed extension, officials said.

Meanwhile, Railways Minister Zillul Hakim announced yesterday that the rail line will be extended to Kaliganj in Jhenaidah via Magura.

He said this while visiting the project site at Magura part.

In May 2018, the government approved a Tk 1,202.49 crore project to construct a rail line from Faridpur's Madhukhali to Magura. Initiated without a feasibility study, it was initially scheduled for completion by April 2022.

However, the deadline has been revised twice, SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Specific Procurement Notice Request for Proposal Information Systems (Design, Supply and Installation) (Without Prequalification)

Memo. No. 1(192) Active Items/Hardware/NSW/2024/ 2051

Date: 16.05.2024

Purchaser: National Board of Revenue (NBR).

Project: Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1 (BRCP-1): Implementation of National Single Window (NSW) and Strengthening Customs Modernization Project.

Contract title: Supply and installation of Hardware and infrastructure (network, communication, cabling, etc.) and standard software for NSW solution; other network, communication equipment, structure, hardware and cabling: Server & Storage and Network & Security components for NSW Server Room & DR.

Country: The People's Republic of Bangladesh

Credit No.: 6002-BD

RFP Reference No.: NBR-GD2A.1

1. The Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1 (BRCP-1), being jointly implemented by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA), National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Ministry of Commerce, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contracts for the Supply and installation of Hardware and infrastructure (network, communication, cabling, etc.) and standard software for NSW solution; other network, communication equipment, structure, hardware and cabling: Server & Storage and Network & Security components for NSW Server Room & DR.

2. The National Board of Revenue now invites sealed Proposals from eligible Proposers for:

Lot-1. Supply & installation of 2 sets of server and storage infrastructure for NBR Data Center (NSW Server Room) in Dhaka and National Disaster Recovery Centre (DRC) in Jessore, including: database and application platforms (servers), database and application backup storage sets, test platforms for application and database, machine learning servers, monitoring servers, and limited quantities of computer and office equipment for NBR and CLPIA offices (laptops - 30, PCs - 197, printers - 64, scanners - 36), along with training and 3-year IT support and maintenance services. Supply and installation period is 20 weeks, operational acceptance shall be achieved within 22 weeks from contract effectiveness.

Lot-2. Supply & installation of network and security infrastructure for NBR Data Center (NSW Server Room) in Dhaka, National Disaster Recovery Centre (DRC) in Jessore, and CLPIA offices, including: ISP switches - 4, Anti-DDOS systems - 2, core routers - 4, DMZ firewalls - 4, core switches - 4, server farm firewalls - 4, server farm switches - 14, SDN controllers - 2, traffic replicators - 4, management switches - 8, NOC switches - 2, WAFs - 2, NAC system - 1, management servers - 4, network monitoring system - 1, branch routers - 8, branch firewalls - 10, branch switches - 16, along with training and 3-year IT support and maintenance services. Supply and installation period is 20 weeks, operational acceptance shall be achieved within 22 weeks from contract effectiveness.

3. The procurement process will be conducted through international competitive procurement using Request for Proposals (RFP) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" dated July 01, 2016 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Proposers as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

4. Interested eligible Proposers may obtain further information from:

Office of the Project Director, Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1: National Single Window Implementation & Strengthening Customs Modernization,
Office address: 10th floor, 160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Attn: Mr. Abul Bashir Md Shafiqur Rahman, Project Director, BRCP-1, Phone: 880255130647, email: pdnsw.nbr@gmail.com

Please copy your request to: Mr. Jewel Ahmed, First Secretary & Deputy Project Director, NSW, Mobile: 01552462593, email: jewelaccustoms@yahoo.com

and inspect the bidding document during office hours (09.00 am to 04.00 pm local time) at the office address given above.

A Pre-proposal meeting will be held at the address below on Date: June 03, 2024 at 11.00 hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST). In addition, the Pre-proposal meeting will be telecast live through videoconference (which will also be recorded) and the link to the Zoom will be sent 7 calendar days before the specified date of Pre-proposal meeting through email to all prospective bidders who purchased the bidding documents who may choose to attend through video conference. For this purpose, the prospective Bidders who intend participating in the virtual Pre-proposal meeting are advised to communicate their e-mail ID, and other contact details to the Employer at the address/e-mail ID specified below, at least ten (10) calendar days before the specified date of the meeting so that the connection details for participating in the said virtual meeting may be advised to them.

- The request for proposals document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Proposers upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of USD 100.00 (one hundred) or BDT 11,000.00 (eleven thousand). The method of payment will be bank draft, cashier's check or pay order. The document will be sent by registered mail or electronic mail, or, at the Proposer's choice, may be collected from the Project Office in person.
- Proposals must be delivered to the address below on or before Date: July 08, 2024 Time: 14.00 hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST). Electronic procurement will not be permitted. Late Proposals will be rejected. The outer Proposal envelopes marked "ORIGINAL PROPOSAL", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Proposers' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on Date July 08, 2024 Time: 14:30 hours BST. All envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public Proposals opening.
- All Proposals must be accompanied by a Proposal Security of USD 70,000 (US Dollar seventy thousand) or BDT 77,00,000 (Bangladesh Taka seventy-seven lakh) for each lot in the prescribed format.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful Proposer's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the request for proposal document.
- The address referred to above is:

IDEB Bhaban (10th Floor), 160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka -1000, Bangladesh,
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1: National Single Window Implementation & Strengthening Customs Modernization,
Phone: 880255130647, Mobile: 01552462593 (DPD-1),
email address: pdnsw.nbr@gmail.com & jewelaccustoms@yahoo.com

NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW PROJECT, IDA CR. NO. 6002-BD
Bank Account Number: 4432103000022
Branch: 44321 - SEGUN BAGICHA Bangabandhu Dhaka Central
Routing Number: 200276168; SWIFT - BSNBDDHLOD.
Sonali Bank PLC

(Abul Bashir Md Shafiqur Rahman)
Project Director