

‘India-friendly’ Coal-run Power Project at Rampal is a Servile Project of Hasina to please her Master

News:

The Awami League (AL) government’s decision not to scrap the 1,320 megawatt coal-fired power plant at Rampal by Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Limited (BIFPCL), a joint venture of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and India’s largest power producer, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) to be set up within 14km of the Sundarban mangrove forest, a UNESCO World Heritage site, has stirred uproar in the media and political arena when, on August 27 (2016), Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lambasted over the stance of the groups and individuals opposing the project, terming their movement anti-development, baseless and misleading.

Comment:

Sheikh Hasina’s dangerous haughtiness developed by serving her regional master will force the country to be its own harvester of sorrow due to her adamant decision to anyhow implement the “India-friendly” Rampal power plant – a project which India did not implement within its own boundaries, whereas the same Indian company (NTPC) is allowed to do the same in Bangladesh! Hasina and her ministers and advisors are trying to convince people that the controversy over the power plant and its impact on the Sundarban was not based on facts. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on physical, biological, social and economic environment of Sundarban done by many independent researchers revealed that climate, topography, land use pattern, air quality, water quality, wetlands, floral and faunal diversity, captured fisheries and tourism will be affected permanently which are irreversible and cannot be mitigated in any way. The factual evidence depicts that there will be no scope of environmental impact management after the thermal power plant gets operational, but the government and its associates are desperately advocating for the project with false and fabricated data to deceive the citizens of the country as they habitually do.

Moreover, apart from limitless environmental hazards, this project would also be economically harmful for Bangladesh. Per unit purchase price of electricity from Rampal would be around 8.85 Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) depending on the estimated coal price whereas Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) purchases electricity at BDT 3 per unit from already existing coal-fired power plant. And what a mockery this is with this country that major investment and liability of this destructive project will be carried out by Bangladesh, whereas India will enjoy fifty percent ownership of the project! Bangladesh and India will equally share up to 30 per cent of the equity of this project. The remainder of the equity, which might be equivalent to

USD 1.5 billion, will be taken as bank loans from Indian EXIM Bank, and Bangladesh government has to give guarantee of the loan! While in the Bangladeshi banking channel when more than BDT 1 trillion is idle, why the obligation of taking loan from enemy state like India arises! Certainly, Hasina is trying to make her master India happy through availing loan from the EXIM Bank of India though the fund is available in Bangladesh. Moreover, Bangladesh government also will give a 15-year income tax exemption for the plant, an exemption worth USD 936m. And Bangladesh would have to spend USD 26m to assure coal delivery to the plant by conducting maintenance dredging.

Hence, when conscious citizen of the county are protesting against this project considering its holistically damaging impacts, this subservient government is constantly denying the arguments and rather branding the protestors as anti-development element. Amid hard protest, Sheikh Hasina, the servile, fawning Prime Minister of Bangladesh, called a press conference and warned the nation that she might stop all the other power plants if people do not stop protesting her cherished master-pleasing project. Pity the country whose PM believes all the power plants of the country being used for public comfort are in fact her property which she could stop anytime. Thus, it came as no wonder when Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj recently said that India has the best ties with Bangladesh among all the neighbors, and the relations between the two countries were improving by the day over several issues. (Prothom Alo, June 20, 2016).

We think it is absolutely a foolish idea to offer the authority on strategic asset like power plant to the enemy state like India whose hostility is well-known. However, if we need coal-run power plant, and people and experts agree that we need such plant for the betterment of the Ummah, it could be done under the sincere leadership of rightly guided Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood that will have ambition and distinct energy policy to improve the situation of the people. There is no scope to go for partnership on power plant with the enemy state which is contradictory with the Islamic Shari'ah as well; Allah (swt) says in Surah An-Nisa, Ayah 141:

﴿وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا﴾

“And never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to overcome them].”

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