
International Intelligence

Jordan Weighs Proposal To Replenish Dead Sea

Jordan's Water Resources Minister Zafir al-Alim announced April 12 that Jordan is considering a proposal to save the Dead Sea, which is drying out fast. The first of three phases of the project would bring water from the Red Sea to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

This would involve construction of a \$1 billion, 115-mile pipeline carrying 1.9 billion cubic meters of water a year, more than double Jordan's 1997 water usage. At that time, the nation's projected water usage for 2003 was 1.135 billion cubic meters.

The second phase would involve desalination of water to run generators for producing hydroelectric power stations serving Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian territories.

The third stage would involve constructing channels to carry desalinated water for agricultural, commercial, and domestic uses.

At a 19-nation water conference in Singapore April 11, reported by AFP, senior government officials said that desalination and recycling of water are the key to protect the world from water starvation in the future.

"The concern has taken a greater importance with the increased frequency and prolonged periods of droughts being experienced worldwide," said Muhammad Said al-Kindi, United Arab Emirates' Minister for Environment and Water.

Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Moves Forward

Following an April 11 agreement among the three nations on pricing mechanisms, a further step has been taken towards building the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, despite opposition from the United States.

The Iranian IRIB broadcasting network reported that the Economic Coordination Committee of the Pakistani cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, approved a gas-sharing deal in which Iran would provide 2.1 billion cubic feet (bcf) of gas a day,

in an initial phase, with equal shares for Pakistan and India.

In a second phase, Petroleum Secretary Ahmad Waqar said, Iran would supply 3.2 bcf. Out of a total of 5.3 bcf from Iran, Pakistan is slated to get 2.1 bcf and India, 3.2 bcf.

A recommendation by the Ministry of Petroleum was also approved, which recommends the pipeline be constructed in sections: Iran is to build it up to the Pakistani border, Pakistan will continue it to the Indian border.

Iran has reportedly already broken ground. Overall construction work is to begin next year, and will be completed in four years. First deliveries are scheduled for 2012.

The United States remains officially opposed to the project.

Russia Maps Ores, Plans Floating Nuclear Plants

Following an April 9 announcement that Russia will be building eight floating nuclear plants to supply electricity to its northern and eastern coasts, sources have reported an ongoing survey of four major underdeveloped mineral deposits in the Russian interior.

According to Sergei Cherkasov of the Vernadsky State Geological Museum in Moscow the survey is intended to provide the government with an assessment of mineral resource potential.

The geological survey department of a major European government is expected to aid in the study.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov announced April 9 that Russia's first floating nuclear power plant will be commissioned in 2010, and supply electricity to the Arctic port of Severodvinsk, according to the Interfax news service.

Russia's vast mineral deposits and specialized know-how in exploration and extraction will play a crucial part in the development of the Eurasian landmass, envisioned in LaRouche's "New Silk Road" development program, and his recent strategic memo on resolving the Cheneyacs' Iran

crisis, and their threat of spreading war in southwest Asia.

High-Speed Rail Corridors Planned for India's South

According to a senior Indian Railway official cited in *The Hindu* of Chennai, a number of inter-city high-speed train (HST) corridors connecting cities of the Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, have been planned.

The rail-building plans coincide with just announced plans for a vast expansion in nuclear power development in the southern region.

On April 10, India's premier atomic energy research center's director, S.Banerjee, had told reporters that India would be starting 12 nuclear reactors within two years to add another 10,000MW of electrical power capacity by the nuclear power sector by 2012.

The majority of these reactors are to be located in Tamil Nadu, Banerjee added.

Power for the railway and much-needed water desalination plants will come from the nuclear reactors now approved for construction.

"The railway is focusing on high-speed inter-city trains, the most profitable segment of passenger business. HST provides the highest safety for passengers, as there have been hardly any accidents on such exclusive corridors world-over.

Migration of traffic to rail will boost the nation's economy since it directly helps in energy conservation," the official told *The Hindu*.

Already a few private Indian corporations have expressed interest in investing in the Chennai (formerly Madras)-Coimbatore sector that will be taken up in Phase I. This will be followed by other routes: Chennai-Madurai, Chennai-Bangalore, and Thiruvananthapuram (formerly Travancore)-Calicut.

For its longer-term energy needs, India is working with Russia on a program of development of thorium breeder reactors, using the nuclear fuel which is abundant on India's beaches.