

International Intelligence

Shanghai-Hangzhou Maglev Project Okayed

March 15—The Chinese Ministry of Railways gave the go-ahead on March 13 for a high-speed magnetic levitation railway project of nearly 200 kilometers, between Shanghai and Hangzhou, including a branch line already in existence in Shanghai. Detailed research on the project is underway, said Zheng Jian, chief designer of the Ministry of Railways. As of now, this is the only new maglev line in China's medium- and long-term railway development plan.

"As the extension of the maglev line connecting Pudong Airport with Shanghai's downtown area, the Shanghai-Hangzhou maglev line will promote the integration of Shanghai and Hangzhou and create a one-hour economic circle. After it is put into operation, the line will help tap idle assets and improve resource allocation between Shanghai and Hangzhou," said Sun Zhang, of the Institute of Railway & Urban Rail Transit at Tongji University.

The Shanghai-Hangzhou maglev line will allow trains to run at speeds of 400 kilometers per hour.

The project mainly adopts technologies imported from Germany, while some of the related technologies are now being developed by China. So far, a maglev train model completely designed and manufactured by China has made its debut in Beijing, and trial railways have been built in Changsha and Tangshan, with 30,000 km of safe operation.

Bangladesh, China To Strengthen Ties

March 15—Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will embark on a landmark visit to China this week to boost bilateral ties, notably economic and technical cooperation. Coming soon after her successful visit to India in January, she leaves for her five-day tour on March 18. The

two countries are expected to sign at least three economic treaties.

On top of the agenda when Hasina meets Prime Minister Wen Jiabao on March 18 will be securing Chinese assistance to develop the \$8.7 billion port in Chittagong. "It will be a great achievement if China agrees to use our Chittagong port, which we want to develop into a regional commercial hub by building a deep-sea port in the Bay of Bengal," said Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, in Dhaka on March 14.

The two countries are also expected to step up plans to build road and railway links from Kunming, in China's southwestern Yunnan province, to Chittagong, which will give China greater access to the Bay of Bengal port. The two countries are expected to sign at least three deals this week, including for a fertilizer factory in Bangladesh, and the seventh Chinese-assisted bridge construction in the country. Chinese companies are expected to clinch deals on oil exploration access off the coast of Bangladesh.

Russia Considers Nuclear Fuel Production in India

March 15—Sergei Kiriyyenko, the head of Russia's Rosatom nuclear power agency, said that "a project to build a factory in India for the production of nuclear fuel is under consideration." This follows Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's March 11-12 visit to India. The possibility of setting up a nuclear fuel facility in India is envisaged in the Inter-Government Agreement on Cooperation in the use of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purpose, signed on March 12 in New Delhi. The accord is also understood to provide for the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel in India, under international safeguards.

India may also take up the Russian offer to participate in an international nuclear fuel enrichment center at Angarsk, Siberia, RIA Novosti reported. The Angarsk reactor will be used for developing thorium-bred U-233 fuel for the next gen-

eration of India's reactors. India has abundant thorium.

India's nuclear fuel manufacturing unit, the Nuclear Fuel Complex, was established in 1971, for the supply of nuclear fuel bundles and reactor core components.

Since India does not have sufficient natural uranium (only 0.7% fissile U-235, and the rest is U-238 and other minerals), Russia will be supplying natural uranium for India's pressurized heavy water reactors, which use natural uranium as fuel.

Korean Study Shows Green Energy Harms Environment

March 15—A new report by the Korea Environment Institute says that projects to develop renewable energy sources, including solar and wind power, are damaging the environment, despite their intent to cut CO2 emissions, a state-run think tank said yesterday, according to the daily Dong-A Ilbo.

The study reported, "A solar power plant built in Bonghwa County, North Gyeongsang Province, that will cut carbon dioxide volume [by using solar power rather than coal] will produce a smaller value [of carbon reduction] than the environmental value lost due to environmental degradation stemming from the project. Hence, 15 years of plant operation will cause \$34 million in net value losses," as measured by "cap and trade" carbon market values.

According to the report, the Bonghwa plant, which was built over thick forest measuring 1.43 million square meters (354 acres), generates 140 megawatts of electricity daily at the height of Summer. The effect of the power generated at the plant to replace that produced by fossil fuel, when calculated in the volume of carbon dioxide, is 21,728 tons. The institute then converted that volume into the cumulative gains expected from the trading of carbon emission rights, and compared the figure to the value of damaged forests due to the construction of the plant.