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Hambantota power plant project given to Chinese firm

by Ifham Nizam

Plans are afoot to handover the contract of the 1,200 Mw Power Plant in Hambantota to a Chinese firm, senior Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) officials said yesterday.

A senior officer told The Island yesterday that the Board of Investment (BoI) and Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama had recommended the contract of the southern power plant to be given to the Chinese company.

However, this officer said: "It is wrong to give the contract to a firm after calling for tenders and getting nearly 14 bidders both locally and internationally. Bids were called recently in the local newspapers.

Many in the CEB, including the powerful engineers' union, are puzzled over the decision of the BoI and the Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion Ministry, he added.

He said that it is very unprofessional to reject other bidders even without going through their quotas.

The Island learns that the Chinese company which received the green light is a company that has vested interests.

Meanwhile, another spokesman said that responsible bodies and officers have to take serious and careful decisions pertaining to the power sector. "Their decisions are going affect the economy of the country or put added burden to the common man."

Citing examples he said that due to ad hoc decisions the 30 MW Kerawalapitiya Power Plant too is going to be unsuccessful. Some CEB officials believe that if the Kerawalapitiya Power Plant is constructed and operated it will cost the country a staggering 77 million a day.

CEB Engineers Union President Ananda Piyathilaka yesterday said that though he cannot comment on the above figures, the cost of Kerawalapitiya Power Plant certainly would increase.

He said that earlier the cost of the plant was US$ 220 million and later it shot up to US$ 300 million.