

# India mulls opening major road projects to international firms

**NEW DELHI:** India's Road Ministry is considering opening up its major road projects to international bidders from Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and China after a dismal response from domestic companies when bids opened this year.

Live Mint, an English business daily, said Road Ministry Secretary Vijay Chhibber had written a letter to National Highways Authority of India chairman RP Singh to explore the option of conducting road shows abroad for major expressway projects such as the 135kilometres Eastern Peripheral Expressway and the 125kilometres Delhi-Meerut Expressway.

"We are exploring the option of conducting road shows in countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Beijing (China). A recent visit abroad made us realise that many other countries are not aware of our projects," the publication said quoting an unnamed senior road ministry official.

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Vijay Chhibber, Road Ministry Secretary

the report said that there was an over-dependence on domestic players who have either run out of equity or have defaulted on some infrastructure debt or the other and are struggling to get finance from banks.

The move is likely to delay the deadline set for the projects by a steering group which monitors the development.

However, the official said, "It is preferable to get a better response for the project than meeting the deadline."

The steering group had asked the ministry to award the Eastern Peripheral Expressway by December 31, 2013, the Mumbai-Vadodara Expressway by March 1, 2014 and the Delhi-Meerut Expressway by

March 15, 2014.

The report also said the ministry failed to attract bids for 20 road projects worth 27,000 crore rupees (US\$4.23 billion), totalling 2,900 kilometres between March 2012 and October 2013. According to Indian Express, since May this year, the National Highways Authority of India has failed to award even a single highway development project.

This is despite the authorities taking a decision to shift to the engineering procurement contract (EPC) format for offering projects to developers, primarily to tide over the lacklustre response seen from private players to the other private public partnership formats. — Bernama

# TCIM, TGB launch first Agrocarrier

By Yvonne Tuah  
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**KUCHING:** Tan Chong Industrial Machinery Sdn Bhd (TCIM), a division under Warisan Tan Chong Holdings Bhd (subsidiary of Tan Chong Group), in collaboration with Taiwan Golden Bee Ltd (TGB) has officially unveiled its latest innovation in palm oil fresh fruit bunches (FFB) in-field collection equipment; the Agrocarrier 6x6, here yesterday.

Aware of the growing labour shortage in the palm oil industry, particularly in the upstream sector, and palm oils' time versus quality sensitivity, the Agrocarrier 6x6 is co-developed by TCIM and TGB to assist in the mechanisation process for palm oil plantations in Malaysia and to improve productivity by a minimum two times.

TCIM executive director Teh Kok Lim said, "With all 350,000 foreign workers employed in plantations, the oil palm industry is still heavily dependent on foreign labour for harvesting, general upkeep and maintenance.

"Although mechanisation has been gradually introduced over the years, it has yet to replace the high labour requirement in the upstream sector.

"Mechanisation must meet the stringent criteria of reducing labour cost, increasing productivity, and improving product quality.

"For this reason, one of the key challenges of the plantation segment is to scale up the level of mechanisation. We are confident



**AGRICULTURAL AID:** (From left) Lin, Teh, Chaloraju, and Ng are seen with the newly unveiled Agrocarrier 6x6.

that the Agrocarrier is able to meet these expectations."

The official introduction of the vehicle also marks a significant milestone in the corporate history of the group, Teh said.

"It underscores our collaboration with TGB to further explore the availability of mechanisations in the agricultural sectors particularly oil palm plantations in Malaysia," he added.

The launch of Agrocarrier 6x6 started off in here yesterday and is set to be launched in Miri, Tawau and Sandakan.

"Right now we are focusing on East Malaysia because we are not going nationwide yet as Sabah and Sarawak is the main market for plantation," Teh commented.

On Agrocarrier 6x6, Teh explained that the vehicle was a project that was approximately five years in the making.

TGB, which co-developed the Agrocarrier 6x6, is also a reputable company as it is a leading

brand in Europe of all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and it also deals with international motoring companies such as BMW, Vespar, and Subaru.

TGB president George Lin, meanwhile, expressed his confidence in Agrocarrier 6x6 and its ability to improve production and quality in the palm oil sector in Malaysia.

The launch was also held in the presence of former deputy minister of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry Ng Lip Yong who kick started the initial research and development process of the Agrocarrier in 2007.

TCIM is currently holding a special promotion on the Agrocarrier 6x6. According to TCIM general manager (East Malaysia) Chaloraju Subramaniam, TCIM is offering promotional price of RM40,000 for its standard Agrocarrier 6x6 and RM43,000 for its high tipping version.

## Great Eastern Life rated top graduate employer in insurance for fifth consecutive year

**KUCHING:** Great Eastern Life Assurance (Malaysia) Bhd (Great Eastern Life) has been recognised for the fifth consecutive year as one of the best places to work at in the Malaysia's 100 Leading Graduate Employer 2013 list.

More than 12,000 Malaysian students and fresh graduates from universities in Malaysia took to the polls to vote for their employers of choice through the Trendence Graduate Barometer 2013.

Great Eastern Life emerged tops again as the choice employer for the insurance sector, the longest-running record for the industry.

Director and chief executive officer of Great Eastern Life, Datuk Koh Yaw Hui shares with the staff of Great Eastern Life the pride of the organisation in maintaining the lead position as the preferred workplace within the industry.

Koh attributed its success to the strong Great Eastern Family spirit of teamwork and togetherness as well as the Human Capital Division's strong efforts in people development.

"In redefining our purpose as a Life company to help our customers and employees on their journey to achieving their best intentions in living healthier, better and longer; our employees, who are our brand ambassadors to their family, friends, associates and their circle of influence – are encouraged to live great and stay healthy so that we can be there longer for our loved ones," she said.

"To this end, Great Eastern Life empowers its staff to take charge of their health and wellness through its LIFE Programme, as well as other staff engagement and teamwork-building initiatives such as the Making Life Great (MLG) initiatives and the annual Great Eastern Family Carnival; in order to enhance its staff's quality of life and promote work-life balance whilst making the environment at the organisation the place where one would choose to work at in Malaysia."

According to senior vice president and head of Human Capital, Datin Nancy Lim, all companies out there play a major part in contributing towards the national talent agenda.

"At Great Eastern Life, from the day a new staff comes onboard the organisation, they are offered comprehensive training to orientate them into their roles and new working environment as well as providing them with continued professional development throughout their career with Great Eastern Life.

"The company places strong emphasis on promoting internally and in its pursuit of grooming in-house talent, Great Eastern Life also supports education at the workplace through its Educational Assistance Programme that allows for staff's study leave, examination subsidies, professional memberships, course fee assistance and special salary increments upon successful completion of courses or passing of professional papers.

"In addition, Great Eastern Life also offers transcendent rewards to employees who excel through Chairman's Awards, recognise long-term service through Annual Appreciation Awards, and other incentives."

In supporting growing minds and talents of the future to promote sector talent development, Great Eastern Life annually offer scholarships to students under its Great Eastern Supremacy Scholarship Awards and provide internship opportunities as well as Management Trainee programmes that facilitates on-the-job training for fresh graduates.

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