

Source: My Republica, February 23, 2020

Nepal completes load flow test

RASUWA, Feb 23: The work of testing load flow from the Nepali side has been completed. The test is a necessary step toward the import and export of electricity from China after the construction of the inter-country transmission line, according to Nepal Electricity Authority.

Under the inspection and direction of NEA, the System Planning Department completed the test of load flow in a month. As per the result, Nepal and China can export and import 3,000 megawatt electricity after the construction of the inter-country transmission line is completed.

According to Ratomate-Rasuwadhi-Kerung 400 KV Transmission Project, the project has tested load flow from two points with India and one point with China. The study was conducted at Dhalkebar and Gorakhpur points of India and Rasuwadhi-Kerung point of China.

According to Komalnath Atreya, project head, after the construction of the project, 3,000 megawatt electricity can be imported and exported from both countries. The outbreak of coronavirus in China has affected the work on the Chinese side. Due to the outbreak, the load flow test which needs to be done together has been delayed.

“The technical team had studied about flow all over Nepal and also studied about initial flow of megawatt,” said Atreya, “The work of load flow test from the Chinese side has not been started, so it will take some time for the test to be conducted.”

State Grid of China will study load flow on the Chinese side. After the study has been completed from both sides, study of load flow will be conducted together. Both sides will construct the Detailed Project Report (DPR) together after the test. According to the project, the transmission line will have a flow of 5,000 megawatt electricity.

China will purchase electricity produced from Nepal after the construction of the transmission line. This is the first inter-country transmission line with China. Nepal can also sell electricity to Bangladesh after the construction of the transmission line.

According to the project officials, Nepal will have 400 KV double circuits and China will have 500 KV double circuits. The project has already completed the pre-feasibility study from Kerung of China to Ratomate of Nepal.

The transmission line consists of 214 towers. The draft report of possibility study was provided in March, 2019. The study report consisted of number of towers, place where towers are installed, river areas, national park areas and required land.

Nepal will construct the sub-station in Ratomate and China will construct the sub-station in Xinlong County, Tibet. The distance of the transmission line between the Rasuwagadhi border point and Ratomate is 70 kilometers. The inter-country transmission line is expected to be completed within six years.

This is the first inter-country transmission line with China whereas transmission lines with India are already connected in 11 places. The Chinese government

is planning to expand transmission lines in seven continents within 2030 under its Belt and Road Initiative.

Source: The Himalayan Times, February 24, 2020

Designated routes of Solu Corridor won't be reviewed: NEA

Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Kul Man Ghising has clarified that the designated route of the 132Kv high-voltage double-circuit Solu Corridor (transmission line project) will not be reviewed.

During a recent inspection at the project site in Solukhumbhu, which has been stalled since almost three years, Ghising said that changing the prescribed route of the Solu Corridor would affect the entire project and thus revising the route should not be an option.

“We would like to assure that locals along the route of the transmission line will be provided the best possible compensation. The designated route of the transmission line project is scientific as it has ensured that the project passes through as few settlements and agriculture land as possible,” said Ghising.

He also urged the locals not to obstruct the project development assuring that the project will provide other necessary facilities to locals in the days to come.

“As production of electricity in the country is increasing, we need to complete construction of transmission line projects on time. Failure to complete the Solu Corridor will result in wastage of electricity produced by different hydropower projects in the Solukhumbu region,” said Ghising.

Based on the recent decision of the Cabinet, Ghising informed that locals along the project route will be compensated up to 75 per cent of the valuation of their land while 100 per cent of compensation will be made available for land being utilised for the planned tower construction.

As per NEA, nine towers will be constructed across the transmission line project route.

Meanwhile, Janardan Gautam, chief of Solu Corridor project, said that the construction of the transmission line project will be completed within this fiscal year if obstruction across 19 different project routes is lifted.

The Solu Corridor transmission line project is being developed to transport electricity produced in Solukhumbu district and nearby areas to Okhaldhunga, Udaypur and within Solukhumbu.

Source: The Himalayan Times, February 25, 2020

Frequent power outage affects life in Tanahun

Life in Ward No 6 of Byas Municipality, Tanhaun, has been adversely affected due to frequent power outage.

The municipality is facing this problem due to very old and dilapidated utility poles that collapse even when there is mild wind.

As many as 150 households in Sanjha of the municipality have been facing problems due to frequent power outage.

Krishna Bahadur Rana, a local, said frequent power outage had hampered the studies of children. “It has also affected small-scale industries operating at the local level,” he added.

Community Electrification Service Centre at Sishaghat looks after power supply in the area. Ward Chair Surya Bhakta Bhandari said the centre could not provide uninterrupted power supply due to old and dilapidated utility poles. “The problem could not be sorted out on time as the centre failed to work in coordination with the ward office,” he added. Bhandari said that dilapidated utility poles had posed serious threat to people’s lives.

Another local, Krishna Raj Dhungana, said that the naked wires were dangling from the collapsed utility poles. He said that the centre had taken no initiative to replace the old utility poles despite frequent requests.

Meanwhile, Manager at the centre Rakesh Karmacharya said preparations were under way to replace the wooden utility poles. “We will start installing iron poles soon,” he said. He further informed that dilapidated old wooden poles would be replaced soon in Sanjha and Tijubatha, among other places, in the district.

Source: My Republica, February 27, 2020

Private sector seeks more role in energy sector

KATHMANDU, Feb 27: The country's private sector has asked the government to clearly define its role in the upcoming law.

Speaking at an interaction on the draft of Electricity Bill organized by Energy Development Council (EDC) and USAID's Nepal Hydropower Development Project (NHDP) in Lalitpur on Wednesday, Guru Prasad Neupane, chairman of Api Power Company Ltd, said that the government should clearly define private sector's role in hydropower developing in the upcoming act. "There are no forums where the private sector can put forward their concerns. Active participation of private sector should be ensured in each and every part of the hydropower sector," he added.

The draft bill mentions about electricity generation, but is silent on other issues like transmission, distribution and trading, participants of the interaction said. Stating that there is monopoly of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) in transmission line sector, they said the upcoming law should unbundle it from the NEA.

As the country is preparing for energy trading with Bangladesh and China along with India, they said that the private sector wants to play an effective role in energy trading as well.

Neupane said that the draft bill fails to differentiate between domestic and foreign investors. "Though the bill proposes handing over licensing rights of projects below 20 MW to provincial government, there are no infrastructures at

the provincial level yet," he said, adding: "We will have to face problem as soon as this law comes into effect. It will be impossible to work that way."

As per the bill, the concerned authority will have to decide on the license for electricity generation within 15 days of receiving applications and supporting documents. Similarly, timeframe for deciding on licenses for electricity transmission or distribution electricity trade is 120 and 45 days, respectively.

Also speaking at the program, Ram Prasad Dhital, spokesperson at Electricity Regulatory Commission, said that the draft bill has tried to introduce competition in power generation sector. "Electricity is both an essential service and a tradable commodity, so it should be treated accordingly," he said. "Licensing mechanism should be taken care by an independent organization, whereas the government system should prepare a framework for legal policy to protect the investment," Dhital added.

Kedar Karki, a hydropower developer, said that the provision to lower license validity period will put public investment at risk. "Why did the government feel it necessary to reduce validity period?" he questioned.

The draft bill has proposed to lower license validity to 40 years which is 10 years lower than what has been provisioned in Electricity Act, 2049 BS. The licensee generating energy from sectors other than hydropower can operate the project for 25 years.

According to the existing act, the term of license to be issued for generation, transmission or distribution of electricity is a maximum of 50 years.

Source: The Rising Nepal Daily, February 28, 2020

Installation Of Penstock Pipes In Progress In Upper Tamakoshi Hydro Project

Kathmandu, Feb. 28 Installation of the penstock pipe in the 355-metre vertical shaft was successfully completed in the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project.

The 456 megawatt project is being constructed in domestic investment at Lamabagar of Bigu Rural Municipality, Dolakha.

Installation of a 220-metre long penstock pipe at the lower vertical shaft and a 135-metre penstock pipe at upper vertical shaft was completed which was expected to be the most difficult task of the project.

Still a 147-metre penstock pipe is left to install in lower vertical shaft and a 171-metre pipe in upper vertical shaft, according to a press statement of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

It takes around seven days to install 10-metre penstock pipes at the upper vertical shaft and five days at lower vertical shaft, NEA said.

The installation of pipes will complete by April 2020 if no further problem arises.

It will take additional one-and-a-half months to install the pipe at the horizontal span between upper vertical shaft and lower vertical shaft.

Managing Director of NEA and chairman of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project Limited Kul Man Ghising inspected the hydropower project and held discussion jointly with the project officials, contractors and consultants about the progress of the works.

During the meeting, contractor companies expressed their commitment to conduct work as per the schedule targeting to complete the project construction in time.

He directed the contractor companies to carry out the construction work so that power generation at least in one unit of the project would begin by May 15, 2020.

Power generation from other five units will begin gradually after power generation begins from one unit, he said.

“The Prime Minister and Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation are serious to start power generation by completing the construction works in time. So, power generation from at least one unit should begin within the current fiscal year,” he said.

He said that the government and the NEA were ready to coordinate and cooperate for the timely completion of the project.

He said that the working performance of Lot 2 contractors had improved in recent weeks.

After being delayed by Indian contractor of Lot 2 Texmaco Rail and Engineering

Limited in stalling penstock pipe in vertical shaft, the installation of lower vertical shaft was given to Lot 3 contractor Andritz Hydro of Austria with no additional financial burden to Upper Tamakosi Company.

However, Texmaco Rail and Engineering Limited has been installing penstock pipe in Upper Shaft.

MD Ghising instructed the chief of Texmaco Rail and Engineering Limited, who was in India, through telephone from the project site to complete the work in time.

Chief Executive Officer of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project Limited Bigyan Shrestha said that grunting and concreting works under the civil works at the main tunnel had reached the final stage.

He said that all the equipment of the power house had been installed and were in ready for operation.