

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 16 July 2018

## **Cabinet clears way for DPR of Nepal-China power line**

The Cabinet on Thursday approved the Chinese government's proposal to prepare a joint detailed project report (DPR) for the first ever Nepal-China cross-border transmission line. The approval clears the way for the two countries to sign an accord to prepare the report during Prime Minister KP Oli's visit to China next week. State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC), the Chinese government appointed focal institution for the development of the trans-Himalayan power line, sent a request last May that the two countries should work together to prepare the DPR.

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), the focal institution appointed by the Nepal government, reviewed SGCC's proposal and sent it on to the Ministry of Energy Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI) which forwarded it to the Cabinet for its approval.

After the pact is signed, a joint technical committee comprising representatives of the two countries will be formed to prepare the DPR. It will hire a consultant to conduct the study and prepare a report. However, the Chinese side will perform the lead role in the preparation of the DPR as requested by the NEA, the state-owned power utility.

As only 80 km out of the estimated 800-km length of the transmission lies within Nepali territory, it is logical that the Chinese side take the lead in developing the project, according to the NEA. The transmission line will extend from Galchhi, Nepal to Shigatse, China.

The Nepali portion of the power line will stretch from Galchhi in Dhading district to Rasuwagadhi on the border with China in the north, according to the NEA. The NEA has already finalised the alignment of the power line.

According to the NEA, the Chinese side is very keen on executing the project and has prioritised it. SGCC officials visited Nepal in early 2017 to hold talks with the MoEWRI and the NEA to build a 400 kV power line linking Rasuwagadhi and Kerung across the northern border.

During the meeting, NEA Managing Director Kulman Ghising asked the Chinese delegation to extend the proposed transmission line further south up to Galchhi so that it could be linked with the Nepal-India cross-border transmission line proposed to be built in Rupandehi district.

As the transmission line is necessary to supply electricity to the railway service which China plans to build up to Kathmandu, the northern neighbour is very eager in developing it.

China has already erected a high voltage transmission line up to Shigatse, and if the Nepal government shows adequate commitment, they have agreed to extend it to Kerung within one and a half years, and ultimately connect it with the power line in Nepal, according to the NEA.

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 16 July 2018

## **Kulekhani-3 languishing due to tardy contractor**

### **infra works**

*PRATAP BISTA*

The construction of the much-delayed Kulekhani-3 Hydropower Project has slowed to a crawl due to the poor performance of the contractor hired to implement the electromechanical works. The performance of Jheijian Jialin, a Chinese company hired by the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to execute the electromechanical works, has been very disappointing, project officials said. However, Sino Hydro, another Chinese company appointed to implement the civil works, has completed its task. A few days ago, three Chinese and 20 Nepali workers were mobilised at the project site to carry out the electromechanical works. However, the Chinese workers abandoned work and flew to their country for a 15-day vacation. "Considering the pace at which the project is being carried out, we are not sure if it will be completed by 2018," said a project official. The project was slated to be completed seven years ago, but 20 percent of the electromechanical works still remain to be finished. The electromechanical contractor needs to erect three towers to evacuate the electricity from the power house to the substation. So far, it has erected only one tower. "If the work is carried out on a war footing, it will take around six months to complete the project and start generating electricity," said the official. The NEA has tried every means possible to make the contractor increase the pace of work, including imposing a fine of Rs80 million for delaying construction. The company's performance didn't improve, leaving the NEA in a difficult position. The power utility can't even fire the contractor as it will be difficult to find another electromechanical contractor when construction is in the final stages of completion. The project's completion deadline has been extended four times since it launched in April 2008. It was originally scheduled to be finished by 2012. When the project missed the deadline, it was extended by 30 months. When that deadline too passed without the project nowhere near completion, the target was pushed back once again till the end of the fiscal year 2015-16.

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 19 July 2018

## **NEA cuts power imports as domestic output rises**

### **Rise in the water levels**

*BIBEK SUBEDI*

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has slashed energy imports from India as domestic hydropower projects have increased their output following a rise in the water levels in the various rivers where the power plants are located.

Imports have been reduced by 20 percent, the state-owned power utility said. Nepal has been importing 500 MW of electricity from India during peak hours.

Until a month ago, the NEA was importing up to 501 MW from India via various cross-border transmission lines during peak hours. Average imports amount to 323 MW. Currently, power imports stand at 406 MW during peak hours and 236 MW at other times. The NEA said it expected to decrease electricity imports from India further as power generation by domestic hydropower plants is expected to rise.

Continuous rain with the beginning of the monsoon has increased the water level in the rivers, increasing electricity generation by around 30 percent compared to a month ago. Currently, domestic plants are generating 745 MW of electricity, up 171 MW from a month ago, according to NEA statistics. Domestic hydropower stations were producing 574 MW as of mid-May.

NEA-owned hydroelectric projects are generating up to 406 MW, up from 363 MW in mid-May. Similarly, private developers have boosted output by 128 MW to 339 MW. In mid-May, power plants owned by private developers were producing only 211 MW of electricity.

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 20 July 2018

## **NEA set to charge Dhalkebar substation this month**

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) plans to start charging the Dhalkebar substation this month. The Indian contractor Telmos Electronic has almost completed the construction of the 220 kV substation which converts high voltage electricity to lower voltage electricity for distribution to customers.

The state-owned power utility hired the Indian company after firing the original Chinese contractor to complete the remaining tasks. Telmos Electronic is about to complete the wiring on the control panel and the construction of a road inside the substation compound, according to the NEA. It has already pulled overhead cables and finished laying cables in the trenches.

The Chinese company was fired for delays after finishing most of the work. Around 5 percent of the construction work remained to be done when it was dismissed. The NEA appointed Telmos Electronic in February 2018 providing it four months to complete the remaining tasks. As per the Rs128 million contract signed with the NEA, Telmos Electronic is required to complete the substation by the first week of June. However, Telmos Electronic asked for extra time as it had to replace various equipment imported by its Chinese predecessor. "As a majority of the tasks have been completed, we will be able to start charging the substation by mid-July," said Radhe Sharan Mahato, the NEA appointed project chief of the Dhalkebar Substation Project.

Once the substation is charged at 220 kV, the power utility can increase energy imports over the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur cross-border transmission line. Currently, the NEA can import up to 160 MW of electricity over the power line. After the completion of the 220 kV substation, the power utility can boost imports by 120 MW during the dry season.

The substation will also be vital to evacuate the power generated by the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project which is on the verge of completion. The surplus power produced during the wet season can also be exported to India through the power line.

Central Power Grid International Economic and Trade Corporation, the Chinese contractor originally hired to implement the project, had completed 95 percent of the work on the substation when it was sent off by the NEA in September 2017 after being fed up with its deliberate delays.

As per the deal signed between the NEA and the Chinese company in June 2014, the substation should have been up and running by September 2015.

However, deliberate delays by the contractor led to the deadline being extended for the third time to May 31, 2017, but that deadline too passed after it halted construction without notification.

Subsequently, the power utility published a global tender to select a contractor to complete the remaining work on the substation project, and Telmos Electronic was selected to do it.