

Source: The Himalayan Times, February 23, 2019

## **Pancheshwar team of experts meet scheduled for Feb 27, 28**

Nepal and India have agreed to hold a meeting of a high-level team of experts for the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project (PMP) on February 27-28, in Kathmandu.

Earlier, the Pancheshwar Development Authority (PDA), the project developer, had proposed to the concerned authorities of both the countries to hold a meeting this month.

Chiranjivi Chataut, joint secretary at the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and also the additional chief executive officer of PDA, informed that the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWRRDGR), India agreed to the proposal for a meeting after Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli raised concerns regarding the development of the project.

According to Chataut, the meeting will finalise the detailed project report (DPR) of the multipurpose project and also hold discussions on downstream benefits and further geological investigations. “This will be the third ‘team of experts’ meeting related to the detailed project report and I hope this meeting will pave a way for the project implementation.”

On April 27 last year, the secretary-level meeting between Nepal and India had extended the deadline to prepare the DPR of the Pancheshwar Project to December, but neither has the DPR been finalised nor a meeting been held yet.

The DPR of the project was prepared by Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS) Ltd, an undertaking of the Indian government.

Chataut further said that both nations need to give life to the 4,800-megawatt capacity multipurpose project, to be constructed on the Mahakali River of the Far-Western Province of Nepal along the India border.

The previous meeting had given momentum to finalise the DPR of the project as soon as possible.

As per Chataut, the meeting will also hold discussions on preparing the policy documents, final bylaws, administration policy and human resources policy of the PDA as soon as possible.

The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project was conceived under the Mahakali Treaty between Nepal and India in 1996. Apart from generating electricity, the project will provide irrigation facility to 0.13 million hectares of land in Nepal and 0.24 million hectares of land in India in addition to other incidental benefits, including flood protection

Source: The Himalayan Times, February 23, 2019

## **NEA to build, standardise 55 new substations**

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) today announced it will develop and standardise 55 substations across the country within this fiscal year.

Along with the end to power cuts in the country, NEA has said it will develop new substations and standardise existing substations in a bid to ensure effective power supply.

Under this plan, NEA will complete developing and standardising 30 grids and 25 distribution substations. In the last one year, NEA has completed the construction of 19 grids and 20 distribution substations across the country. Five of the 20 new substations were inaugurated in the last three days.

“NEA plans to complete the construction of 600 kilometres of new transmission lines and 8,000 kilometres of distribution lines by the end of this fiscal year,” reads a press statement issued by NEA today.

Minister for Energy Barshaman Pun, who is also the chairman of the board of NEA, said that the government is focusing on the development of high-capacity transmission lines to ensure that produced power is consumed within domestic market.

“As the country will have surplus electricity production soon, we should expand the market for electricity in the country. In a bid to ensure that electricity consumption is increased and surplus electricity does not go to waste, we should promote industrialisation and encourage the private sector to set up new industries,” said Pun.

Citing that the country will have surplus electricity production soon, he asked NEA to develop necessary grid, transmission lines and other infrastructure accordingly.

Urging contractors to complete the construction of different transmission lines within the designated period, Pun said that the government will recognise those contractors completing their projects on time while it will take action against those contractors failing to do so.

NEA also informed that priority has been given to construction of high-capacity transmission lines along different industrial areas and corridors to ensure uninterrupted power supply in such areas.

Similarly, Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, secretary at the Ministry of Energy, said that the government's prime focus has been to expand the energy distribution system and construction of transmission lines. "This will not only ensure effective supply of energy but will also increase people's access to electricity," he said.

Meanwhile, Kul Man Ghising, managing director of NEA, said effective supply of electricity is necessary to raise consumption of electricity in country. "We are committed to controlling power leakage, ensuring uninterrupted supply of electricity and supplying electricity as per demand."

Source: My Republica, February 24, 2019

## **80 percent work at Upper Sanjen project complete**

HIMNATH DEVKOTA

RASUWA, Feb 24: Construction work for Rasuwa-based Upper Sanjen Hydroelectricity Project is 80 percent complete, and is moving forward at a sound pace that would possibly see the project being completed by the end of this year.

At present, the construction work for the foundation of powerhouse is going ahead in full swing. According to the project administration, the work on powerhouse construction work commenced after the completion of work on penstock pipe and canal. The penstock pipe is 40 meters long and the land-based canal is 1300 meters.

Hydro-mechanical works are going on at present. Sudhan Singh, the head of the project, said: "Headwork, which is a critical component of hydro project, will be completed by mid-April."

The 14.8 mega watt project was commenced shortly after signing a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) in October 2011. The project was extended three times after failing to meet the deadlines.

Initially, the project was planned to be completed in August 2015. However, considerable delays due to earthquake and the Indian blockade shortly afterwards saw the deadline being postponed. The current deadline for the project is January 2020.

The project is divided into four components: civil, electro-mechanical, hydro-mechanical and transmission line. Each component is contracted out to separate international and national contractors: Bajra Guru and ECI for civil construction;

Tongfang Electric International for electro-mechanical construction; Nepal Hydro and Electric Ltd for hydro-mechanical construction; and Mudbari and Joshi Construction Pvt. Ltd for transmission line construction.

The project is being implemented by Sanjen Jalvidhyut Company Limited -- a subsidiary of Chilime Hydropower Company Limited. Chilime is promoted by Nepal Electricity Authority -- the state-owned power utility.

According to the project administration, civil construction work is 80 percent complete, whereas hydro-mechanical and electro-mechanical works are 60 percent complete. Along with the work for head box, the construction work for picking and slope protection are also going on. The project will need to construct the 7-kilometer-long transmission line from the powerhouse to Chilime Hub.

The company is also building Sanjen Hydroelectric Project (42.5 MW). Both the projects are being implemented in a company model following the success of Chilime Hydropower Plant (22.1 MW) which started generation in 2003.

Source: My Republica, February 23, 2019

## **Upper Tamakoshi work gaining momentum**

Ramesh Khatiwada

DOLAKHA, Feb 23: Work for laying penstock pipes at Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, a national pride project, is gaining momentum after some of the works given to Indian contractor Texmaco were withdrawn and given to Austrian company Andritz Hydro.

The Indian company was delaying its work of laying penstock pipes, which was significantly affecting the progress of the whole project.

According to the project officials, both the companies are now working together to lay the upper and lower sections of the penstock pipes.

Ganesh Neupane, the spokesperson for the project, said: “The planned penstock for the project has a steep incline and sharp bend that made its construction and laying very difficult for the Indian contractors.”

According to Neupane, at present, both the contractors are expediting their work and the complicated section of the penstock pipes was completed last week.

“The Indian company had a very difficult time for completing the job before the Austrian contractor Andritz was assigned to complete the task,” he added.

Alongside, the work of transporting necessary construction material is also gaining traction with the recent developments in the project.

Around 60 pipes that were left stranded in Khadi Chaur of Sindupalchowk by the Indian contractor are also being transported to the project site at the moment. Eight large scale trailers are deployed for the purpose.

“It takes around a week to transport the penstock pipes from Sindupalchowk to the project site,” Neupane said, adding: “The work to transport the remaining ten penstock pipes will be completed within a week.” According to the project officials, more pipes are being imported from India; some of them have already reached the Birgunj border, from where they will be transported up the hills to the project site. Previously, the Indian contractor had transported half of the 198 small and large penstock pipes up to Sunkoshi in Sindupalchowk.

Works at Tamakoshi, like other major hydropower projects, are divided into four components: civil, hydro-mechanical, electro-mechanical, and transmission line. These different components have been contracted out to different international contractors specializing in the respective areas.

Source: My Republica, February 25, 2019

## **Electricity cables to go underground in Kathmandu**

### **Cables laid without digging trenches**

KATHMANDU, Feb 25: Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has started work to put power lines underground.

The power utility has selected Indian firm KEI Industries Ltd to develop underground power supply system distributing lines to over 100,000 households in Kathmandu district within 30 months.

To begin with, NEA is taking power lines of Maharajgunj Distribution Center and Ratna Park Distribution Center underground. Maharajgunj Distribution Center covers northern part of Kathmandu including Gongabu, Tokha and Baluwatar, among, others while Ratna Park Distribution Center supplies power to old parts of Kathmandu like New Road, Thamel and Tripureshwar.

The project is worth Rs 7.41 billion. KEI Industries Limited will create underground infrastructure for distributing power supply from 400 to 11,000 voltage cables, according to NEA officials.

Apart from enhancing power supply system, the project also aims at beautifying Kathmandu Valley by getting rid of entangled wires which have been an eyesore for many years.

With the new infrastructure -- first of its kind in terms of scale, NEA is hopeful of lowering technical losses as well as readying necessary infrastructure to go for automation of electricity supply in the future.

Automation means using multiple electricity supply feeders for uninterrupted power supply, according to NEA officials.

Underground electricity distribution system also prevents any possible hazards in the event of accidents and falling of electricity poles.

Valley denizens won't have worry about another round of road digging, as the NEA is deploying a new technology called horizontal directional drilling. It is a trenchless method of installing underground pipes of cables.

Abhishek Adhikari, the head of NEA's Kathmandu Valley Middle and Northern Distribution System Enhancement Project, said that the project will also use gun tracker radar while laying pipelines to assess underground structure before planning horizontal drilling.

NEA will also lay down optical fiber and television cables along with power lines. “Our optical fiber network will be different from similar network laid by Nepal Telecom,” Adhikari added.

Officials of the power utility say that the contractor would take few more weeks to begin its works.

Kathmandu Valley Middle and Northern Distribution System Enhancement Project is a part of Power Transmission and Distribution Efficiency Enhancement Project loan financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB). It will cover remaining areas of Kathmandu district in second, and Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and other major cities of the country later on.

Improved access to efficient, adequate, and high-quality power supply in the Kathmandu Valley is the expect outcome of this project, according to project administration manual of the ADB.

Source: Nepal Energy Forum, February 25, 2019

## NEA to install underground power cables in Kathmandu

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has decided to install underground power lines in Kathmandu in a bid to minimise the risk of electrocution and to beautify the city.

In the first phase of the project, underground cables would replace overhead power line in grids overseen by Maharajgunj Distribution Centre and the Ratnapark Distribution Centre, NEA informed.

Indian contractor KP Industries will undertake the project worth Rs 6.60 billion with a deadline of 30 months from initiation.

According to NEA Maharajgunj Project Chief Abhishek Adhikari, overhead electricity cables and telecommunications lines among others have uglified the streets while also increasing the risk of unwanted incidents, and the project aims to resolve such issues.

Denizens of Bagbazaar, Ason and Durbar Marg will get underground power lines and smart meters in the preliminary phase of the project, NEA officials said.

Source: The Kathmandu Post, February 26, 2019

## Proposed law gives new powers to Investment Board Nepal

- BIBEK SUBEDI, Kathmandu

The Cabinet recently approved a bill governing public-private partnership and foreign direct investment projects that gives Investment Board Nepal new powers to approve schemes worth more than Rs6 billion. Currently, only investments of more than Rs10 billion come under the board's purview as per the Investment Board Act which regulates its operation and functioning.

Apart from dealing with public-private partnership and foreign direct investment projects, the proposed legislation, which will supersede the Investment Board Act, will also determine how Investment Board Nepal is operated.

“We are in the process of tabling the new bill in Parliament,” said Ramesh Dhakal, secretary at the Prime Minister's Office. “After the bill becomes law, Investment Board Nepal will handle investment proposals of more than Rs6 billion while the related ministries of the federal and provincial governments and local bodies will deal with investment proposals of less than that amount.”

The Finance Ministry had sent a draft bill that proposed allowing local bodies and provincial governments to approve investment proposals worth up to Rs2 billion and Rs4 billion respectively, but the Cabinet removed these provisions before approving it. According to Dhakal, local bodies and provincial governments will be allowed to approve investments by other laws.

According to sources at the Prime Minister's Office and the Finance Ministry, Parliament is expected to pass the new legislation well before the Nepal Investment Summit slated for the last week of March. The government plans to present the new piece of legislation as a major legal reform to the foreign investors participating in the event in order to win their confidence to increase foreign direct investment in Nepal.

The new law, according to the Finance Ministry source, envisions establishing two wings at Investment Board Nepal—Public-Private Partnership Centre and Investment Centre. The role of the Public-Private Partnership Centre is to identify projects,

manage public financing, control and oversee public-private partnership projects, develop a public-private partnership framework, advise and support agencies to implement public-private partnership projects, act as a knowledge centre and, in some cases, also work as a project bank. The Investment Centre will promote Nepal as an investment destination besides providing investment approvals.

As a majority of the infrastructure projects implemented by Investment Board Nepal are being developed under the public-private partnership model, the government wants to introduce the new law to replace the existing Investment Board Act, according to the source.

Source: My Republica, February 27, 2019

## **Budhigandaki hydel project will gain momentum-Chair Dahal**

GORKHA Feb 27: Communist Party of Nepal Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal said the construction of Budhigandaki Hydro as a national pride project will gain momentum.

Inaugurating a new-constructed building of Gandaki Rural Municipality-7 on Tuesday, Dahal, also the former Prime Minister, said he would not allow any delay in the construction of the project.

"I had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Chinese Company to expedite the construction of the reservoir-based project when I was the Prime Minister", he added.

"The project has seen delay but is now taking momentum", he further said.

The distribution of compensation to the project-affected people has taken ahead in a right way, he said, adding preparation is being made to determine the compensation package in the remaining areas.

"The project is not only meant for generating power", he said, adding it would have far-reaching importance to the development of Nepal.

The government would emphatically take ahead such national glory project as it has huge potential to steer ahead the country to prosperity.

The CPN Chair pledged to spend next ten years for country's prosperity.

Source: Ratopati, February 27, 2019

### **Middle Marsyangdi – Damauli- Marsyangdi power transmission line into operation**

Damauli– The 132-KV double circuit Middle Marsyangdi- Damauli-Marshyangdi transmission line has come into operation.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) brought the 22 kilometres long transmission line into operation (charge) from Monday.

NEA executive director Kulman Ghising expressed the belief that electricity leakage in the entire transmission system would decrease with the operation of the transmission line thereby enhancing its reliability.

Before this, the situation was such that the excess electricity generated during the monsoon season by the hydroelectricity projects operated by private sector in Lamjung district could not be utilized as the Middle Marsyangdi-Maryangdi transmission line used to get overloaded and it could not be fed to the national grid.

"Before this the situation was such that electricity generated by the private sector operated hydroelectricity projects including Middle Marsyangdi and Marsyangdi could not be transmitted whenever there was problem in the Marsyangdi-Kathmandu and Marsyangdi-Bharatpur transmission lines. This problem has also been addressed now. The electricity produced from these projects can be sent to Bharatpur and Pokhara via the Damauli sub-station," Ghising said.

A total 205 megawatt power, including 70 megawatt power generated from Middle Marsyangdi and 69 Megawatts power generated from the Lower Marsyangdi project operated by NEA as well as around 66 megawatts power generated from the electricity projects operated by the private sector in Lamjung district, has been transmitted to Kathmandu and Bharatpur of Chitwan via the Middle Marsyangdi- Marsyangdi transmission line.

Project chief Shubharambha Bikram Shah said the electricity generated from these centres could be transmitted to Pokhara and Bharatpur after the operation of the Middle Marsyangdi-Damauli-Marsyangdi transmission line. "We are bringing the 132-33 KV substation under the project now under construction at Markichok of Tanahun into operation after some days," Shah added.

Similarly, according to him, 'bay' has been added to the Marsyangdi, Damauli and Middle Marsyangdi sub-stations. The electricity generated from projects being developed by the private sector in the Dordi corridor of Lamjung can also be fed into the national grid with this added facility.

Source: The Himalayan Times, March 1, 2019

## **Key differences of Pancheshwar project unresolved**

The two-day meeting between the experts of Nepal and India to discuss on the implementation of the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project (PMP) concluded today with no concrete progress on key differences between the two nations on the project.

Talking to The Himalayan Times after the meeting, Prabin Aryal, spokesperson for the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, said that though detailed discussions were carried out on implementing the project, no concrete understandings have been made on different issues including the downstream benefits of the project, water sharing, consumption and price, investment, irrigation and energy production capacity of the multipurpose project.

Nepal and India have been at odds regarding the detailed project report (DPR) since long. The Indian side has been laying claim to the water in the lower Sharada dam, while Nepal has been demanding that it should get 50 per cent of the water based on the principles of equal-sharing.

Similarly, though Nepal has been claiming its right to 50 per cent of the total water, India has been denying it constantly.

Though the meeting was expected to finalise the detailed project report of the project, it was unable to do so.

On April 27 last year, the secretary-level meeting between Nepal and India had extended the deadline to prepare DPR of the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project to December.

The project is located at the Mahakali River, which is the border of Nepal and India in the western region of Nepal. Talks on the project were initiated at least 23 years ago, but there has been lack of progress due to various issues.

The Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project was conceived under the Mahakali Treaty between Nepal and India in 1996. Apart from generating electricity, the project will provide irrigation facility to 0.13 million hectares of land in Nepal and 0.24 million hectares of land in India in addition to other incidental benefits, including flood protection.

Meanwhile, Aryal said that the next meeting between the experts of the two countries, which is yet to be decided, will hopefully reach consensus on all the aforementioned issues.