

Source: My Republica, 28 February 2021

India enforces law paving way for Nepal to carry out cross-border trade of electricity

KATHMANDU, Feb 28: India has paved the way for Nepal to export the surplus electricity to the Indian land, by endorsing the Procedure for Approval and Facilitating Import/Export (Cross Border) of Electricity.

The Indian authority after two years of issuing the guidelines on cross-border trade of electricity has endorsed the related procedures, providing the full-fledged implementation of the related laws to trade electricity from its neighboring countries including Nepal. According to the Central Electricity Authority of the Government of India, the procedure came online on Friday.

The provision has now cleared the way for Nepal to sell its surplus energy produced mainly during the peak production season. Nepal and India entered into a Power Trade Agreement in 2014. However, in the absence of the necessary law, the agreement had failed to come online. Due to the reason, Nepal has been facing wastage of up to 200 MW daily of the produced electricity.

The enforced law talks about providing energy trade access to India and its neighbouring countries through bilateral agreements at government level, through bidding route, through mutual agreements between entities or tripartite agreements. Also, it facilitates cross-border trade of electricity in a manner that ensures reliable, secure and stable operation of the interconnected grid and does not jeopardize grid security at any point of time.

Also, it maintains that a participating entity having a generating station located in a neighbouring country may develop, operate and maintain a dedicated transmission system from the generating station to the pooling station within India at its own cost after obtaining all the necessary approvals from respective countries.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 1 March 2021

Manang Connected To National Grid For The First Time

Manang, March 1: Manang district, known as a district beyond the Himalayas, has been connected with the national grid for the first time. A 33-KV transmission line has been connected to the national grid recently.

According to Milan Subedi, Chief of Nepal Electricity Authority, Manang Distribution Centre, some 18 months after an office was set up in the district to supply electricity across the district, Manang has been finally connected to the central electricity grid.

Earlier, the locals here were availing electricity generated from various micro hydro power projects.

The team, in an effort to illuminate the district, had to surmount issues like limited capable human resources, difficult geographic terrain and extreme cold climate conditions, shared Subedi.

The 33-kv transmission line was connected to the national grid via the sub-station at Chame Rural Municipality-1 Syarku Sub-station in Manang linking Udipur Sub-Station in Lamjung with Randhi Hydro Power Project.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 1 March 2021

Sinohydro Workers Back To Work

Damauli, March 1: Agitating Sinohydro Company workers in Tanahu have been convinced to withdraw a strike and get back to work from today. The dispute between the company management and workers has come to an end with the signing of a bilateral agreement.

On Friday night, excavator driver Pushkar Thapa was cleaning the vehicle at the project power house and in course of the cleaning, a Chinese individual got wet. In response, the infuriated Chinese hurled a rock at the vehicle, leaving its glass smashed which prompted both sides to engage in a heated debate and since then the workers had been on a strike. According to Tanahu Hydropower Project Chief Achyut Ghimire, both sides sat for negotiations, deciding to resume works.

The management side has agreed to take action against the guilty in the rock throwing and pay workers as per the wage rate fixed by the District Committee. Other demands put forth by workers will be addressed gradually, according to Ghimire.

The company is constructing the 140-megawatt- package 2 of the project at Jhaputar of Rhishing rural municipality-1.

The project is preparing to sign a contract agreement with a builders' company for the package-2. Three companies had expressed interest to be partners of the project and the Asian Development Bank has allowed selection of Song Da Corporation Vietnam/Kalika Construction JV. Part of the package-2 of the project is being built with ADB assistance.

The total cost of the project is 505 million USD (including the cost of the transmission line, rural electrification and the interest amount during the construction period). JICA will bear 184 million USD for the works under package-2, it is stated.

Source: The Kathmandu Post, 1 March 2021

10 megawatts of solar power evacuated to national grid in Province 2

Nepal immediately needs at least 200 megawatts of energy to become self-reliant during the dry season and solar energy is the best option, experts say.

A Nepali private company has generated about 10 megawatts of solar power in the southeastern region of Dhalkebar, Mahottari of Province 2 where hydropower potential is almost nil and evacuated it to the national grid.

This is the largest solar power fed into the national grid by a private company till date.

On November 10, 2020, private producer, Ridi Hydropower Development Company, had evacuated 8.5 megawatts of solar energy to the national grid from its plant in Manigram, Rupandehi.

The Dhalkebar plant is spread over nearly 40 bighas [6.3 hectares] of land. The developer—Eco Power Development Company—had contracted the project to Kushal Projects Nepal under the design, supply, construction, operation and maintenance modality.

The developer said that the project was completed in a record duration of 7 months despite the Covid-19 lockdown. The power was evacuated to the national grid on February 18.

The solar energy has been sold to the Nepal Electricity Authority at Rs7.30 per unit. The total investment cost of the project is around Rs900 million.

Each solar panel covers an area of 2.22 square-meter. According to Kushal Projects, a total of 28,504 panels has been installed at the plant.

Sandeep Agrawal, managing director of Kushal Projects, said power generated from the sun would address the scarcity of energy during the dry season and reduce dependence on importing electricity.

From December to February—which are the dry months in winter—the country's power generation drops due to a fall in water levels in the rivers as snow in the mountains doesn't melt.

In Province 2, there is no possibility for the development of hydropower projects. But the province has abundant sun energy that could be tapped, according to energy experts.

As a result, a number of solar-powered energy projects are in the pipeline. Kushal Projects has already received solar projects in five more places in Nepal.

Energy mix of Nepal, which till date is dominated by hydropower, is expected to be more diverse in coming years with more private developers showing interest in installing solar plants in different locations.

In the fiscal year 2019-20, the Department of Electricity Development had awarded survey licences to various developers willing to install solar plants at 21 different locations within the country.

The combined installed capacity of these 21 solar plants will be 317.14 megawatts which will account for almost 70 percent of the total installed capacity of 56 solar plants that have received survey licences from the department till date.

The largest among them is 120 megawatts Solar PV Project Dhalkebar in Mahottari district owned by Chaudhary Group, one of the biggest business houses of the country. Similarly, the second and third largest plants are 50 megawatts Solar PV Project Barju in Sunsari and 30 megawatts Parwanipur Solar Farm in Parsa—both owned by the same group, according to the department.

Agrawal said that they have been working as per the government's energy mix plan that aims to produce 15 percent of energy through solar power.

According to experts, Nepal immediately needs at least 200 megawatts of energy to become self-reliant during the dry season and solar energy is the best option.

Province 2 had also announced to install 50 megawatts of solar energy in its first policy and programme in 2018-19. Although the province government's plan has not moved forward, for the construction of solar energy, the private sector is aggressively investing in the solar plants.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 4 March 2021

Prime Minister To Lay Foundation Stone Of Sunkoshi Marin Diversion Multi-Purpose Project

By Baburam Devkota, Sindhulimadi, Mar. 4: Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli will be laying the foundation for the construction of the national pride project Sunkoshi Marin Diversion Multi-purpose Project today.

According to the field contact office of the project in Sindhuli, all the preparations for the programme have been completed.

Hydrogeologist Bishwa Bandhu KC said that that the construction works of the tunnel from Kusumtar would begin 2-3 months after the foundation stone is laid.

A Chinese Company China Overseas Engineering has received the contract to construct the tunnel for the project.

The construction of the Sunkoshi Marin Project is expected to complete within five years. All the legal compliances such as the acquisition of land and providing compensation to the locals have in the area covered by the project have already completed.

By constructing a dam of 12-meter height in Sunkoshi River, the water of the river will be diverted to the Marin River at Kusumtar via a 13.1-kilometer-long tunnel in 67 cubic seconds.

A total of 28.62-megawatts of electricity will be produced from the project and will be connected to the Dhalkebar sub-station under the national grid.

The main objective of this multi-purpose project is to provide an irrigation facility in 122,000 hectares of land at Bara, Rautahat, Dhanusa, Mahottari and Sarlahi.

The government has allotted a budget of Rs. 2.5 billion for the project.