

Source: The Rising Nepal, 23 May 2021

Likhu-4 Hydel Dam Collapses

Okhaldhunga, May 23: Dam of Likhu-4 Hydroelectricity Project got damaged during the testing on Friday morning.

The dam of the 52.4-Megawatts (MW) project at Likhu River bordering Okhaldhunga and Ramechhap districts collapsed soon after water was sent to its channel on Thursday.

About 90 per cent work of the project is completed. Civil works at the site are being handled by an India-based SSNR which has been constructing the dam, desilting chamber and other structures. Likewise, Nepali company South Asian Infrastructure has been constructing powerhouse, valve south and surge shaft.

After the completion of the project, water would be channeled to a tunnel from the constructed dam at Khijidemba Rural Municipality, in Ward No. 3, to Electricity Generation House in Limti. Initially, the project was designed with the capacity of 120 MW, but later the promoter company reduced the capacity to current 52.4 MW.

The Rs. 10.16 billion project is financed by a consortium of Laxmi Bank, Global IME Bank, Nabil Bank, Sunrise Bank, Nepal SBI Bank, Sanima Bank and Prabhu Bank. The banks are investing about 75 per cent of the total cost while the promoters, Triveni Group and Bishal Group, will invest 25 per cent.

The project had signed the Power Purchase Agreement with the Nepal Electricity Authority about five years ago and its completion was scheduled for August of 2020.

Local people blamed the developer Green Ventures and the SSNR for the damage.

Santa Narayan Shrestha, a local, said that the dam couldn't withstand the pressure of water and so collapsed. Other locals also expressed doubt over the quality of materials used. However, the project is yet to make the assessment of the damage. Public Relations Officer of the project Krishna Das Shrestha couldn't be reached for the comment.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 25 May 2021

Tunnel Testing Of Upper Tamakoshi Resumes

Charikot, May 25:The Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project being constructed in Bigu Rural Municipality-1, in Dolakha district, is once again testing its main tunnel. The project, which is finally nearing completion a decade after construction began, first tested the tunnel on April 29 by sending water through it. However, the test had to be stopped because of a leak. Water leaked from the cover of a manhole of a penstock pipe connecting the 373-meter lower vertical shaft with the 310-meter upper vertical one.

“The team has repaired the leaking cover and we resumed testing on Monday by once again sending water through the tunnel,” said Dr. Ganesh Neupane, spokesperson for the Tamakoshi Hydel Project, informing that the team had begun testing the civil and hydro-mechanical structures.

With the manhole lid repaired, Neupane informed that the project would move on to testing the adit (the horizontal passage leading to a mine after the purposes of access or grainage) gates by completely filling the eight-kilometre-long tunnel with water. If the team does not detect any damages, they will route the water to the main shut-off valves (MSOV) through the bifurcation. Then the testing and commissioning of the six turbines and six generators connected to the six units of the underground power house will begin. “If everything goes as planned, the first unit will start generating 76 Megawatts (MW) of electricity before July,” said Dr. Neupane. All six units of the hydroelectricity project have a capacity of generating 76 MW each. “Once the first unit comes into operation, the others will follow suit,” Neupane said. The project was delayed multiple times due to hindrances in digging the 90-degree upper and lower tunnels and installing the penstock pipes.

Source: My Republica, 26 May 2021

‘High tariff rate, poor infrastructure big hurdles in increasing electricity consumption’

KATHMANDU, May 26: Private sector has demanded that the government revise the electricity tariff rate and maintain uninterrupted power supply to increase domestic consumption of electricity.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has been charging an average of over Rs 10 per unit from the households even if the cost per unit for the state-owned power utility has come down to Rs 2 per unit. For the industrial users, the cost is up to Rs 30 per unit. At present, households have been consuming around 37 percent of the total demand while it is 42 percent by the commercial sector.

Ananda Chaudhary, treasurer of Independent Power Producers’ Association, Nepal, said the electricity tariff in Nepal is one of the highest in the South Asian countries. “This has impacted consumption by both the households and industrial sector,” said Chaudhary at a program organized by the Society of Economic Journalists-Nepal (SEJON).

According to Chaudhary, the lack of government policies such as a guideline on cross-border power trading and regulation for power trading and wheeling charges have been affecting the cross-border trading of electricity.

As of Tuesday, the country’s demand for electricity is Rs 1,302 MW. While the private hydropower projects produce 618 MW, NEA through its production plants has been supplying 572 MW and the rest is imported from India. A number of projects including Singati Khola Hydropower (25 MW) and Upper

Tamakoshi Hydropower Project (456 MW) are almost in the final stage of construction. According to the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, new projects with a capacity of around 17,000 MW are still in the process of construction. “Although the country is heading toward surplus energy production, the consumption has not grown significantly,” the ministry Secretary Madhu Bhetwal said.

Bhetwal also stressed the need for revising the existing modality of electricity tariff to facilitate energy consumption in a number of sectors including electric vehicles, special economic zones, cement factories and several industries in the industrial corridors.

The participants also underlined the disruption in smooth power supply due to poor infrastructure including the transmission lines causing the low consumption of electricity. “There is an urgent need for a large amount of investment in transmission lines to increase load,” said Hitendra Dev Shakya, managing director of NEA.

Petroleum products that are imported from India are the topmost expenses in the country’s import lists. The government has been subsidizing the cooking gas whereas the country has been losing a large amount of foreign currency to import the gasoline in the absence of policies to boost domestically produced hydroelectricity that are going on wastage due to lack of infrastructure.

Ram Prasad Dhital, member of the Electricity Regulatory Commission, said they were studying the possible changes in electricity demand by households and industrial consumers along with a revision of the tariff management system.