

Source: The Rising Nepal; 19 April 2015

Agro and water Resource Committee directs the Energy Ministry and its bodies to implement the announced programmes

The Agriculture and Water Resources Committee under the Legislature Parliament has directed the Energy Ministry and its bodies to implement the announced programmes.

Today's meeting of the Committee once again directed the Ministry and its bodies to implement the programmes immediately, citing the directives issued by the Committee in the past were not implemented.

Urging the National Planning Commission, Energy Ministry and Finance Ministry only to present the objective programmes, the Committee pointed out that the annual programmes presented by the budget booklet and Energy Ministry were difficult to be completed, said Committee President, Gagan Thapa.

Responding to the queries raised by lawmakers, Energy Minister Radha Gyawali said that making the country free from power outage was the need of hour.

Giving emphasis on the development of solar energy, she said that alternative energy should be managed until the production of energy after the completion of the reservoir-based projects.

The Energy Ministry clarified that expected result from proposed hydropower projects was not achieved due to delay in process.

She expressed sadness over the difficulties in implementing the projects due to reviving the decision of the government by the court, among others.

Stating that the NPC has determined the budget ceiling of Rs 39 billion to the Energy Ministry for the coming fiscal year, Energy Secretary Rajendra Kishor Chhetri said that collective initiatives were necessary to end anomalies seen in the hydropower sector.

He expressed the belief that organizational and structural reforms of the Nepal Electricity Authority were necessary.

Meanwhile, the meeting also approved the condolence proposal in the demise of senior most members of the Constituent Assembly and former Prime Minister, Surya Bahadur Thapa.

Committee members extended tributes to late Thapa by observing one minute's silence

Source: The Kathmanu Post; 20 April 2015

Energy Min spends 36pc of budget by Q3

The Ministry of Energy (MoE), which received one of the highest budget allocations in the current fiscal year, has managed to spend just 36 percent of the funds as of mid-April. It said that its line agencies had so far been able to use a mere Rs12.42 billion out of its massive spending budget of Rs34.17 billion.

Energy Minister Radha Gyawali said that the ministry and line agencies could not make proper utilization of the budget following political instability which hindered a number of projects, lack of coordination between line ministries and several bureaucratic and procedural hassles.

“Our aim of ending load-shedding in the country isn’t possible without making proper utilization of resources,” Gyawali said.

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), which received the largest portion of the ministry’s budget of Rs30.29 billion, has so far succeeded in spending just Rs10.31 billion. This represents 34 percent of the total amount.

According to Mukesh Kafle, managing director of the NEA, the state-owned power utility has failed to make proper expenditure of the budget following its failure to make a significant move in developing transmission lines.

“A significant chunk of the budget has been allocated for transmission line development. However, there has been no progress due to a number of issues including land acquisition,” Kafle said.

The budget for the current fiscal year has earmarked Rs12.62 billion for electricity generation and Rs13.55 billion for transmission line construction. Kafle said that a large chunk of the amount allocated for transmission line projects had been set aside for land acquisition. The budget goes to the NEA under the financing heading as it is government investment.

The NEA has stated that though the expenditure has remained dismal so far, it is aiming to spend 70 percent of the resources by the end of the current fiscal year. “A majority of the expenditure is made in the fourth quarter. Considering the progress so far, we are sure spending will reach at least 70 percent,” Kafle said.

According to Kafle, Rs400-Rs500 million will be spent on the 30 MW Chameliya Hydropower Project after it gets clearance from the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. The PAC had found out a huge misappropriation of funds in the project and had subsequently directed the government not to make any further payments until the investigation over the overall scam had been cleared.

The NEA, which has asked for Rs39.55 billion in the upcoming budget in line with the ceiling fixed for it, has stated that it will mostly give continuity to the projects it is implementing during the current fiscal year and plans to execute three micro hydro projects and a solar power plant project. The Department of Electricity Development (DoED), which received the second highest budget of Rs2.87 billion, has spent Rs1.48 billion, or 52 percent of the resources allocated.

Likewise, the Budhi Gandaki Hydropower Project Development Committee and the Nalsingadh Hydropower Development Committee have spent 40 percent and 5 percent of the resources allocated to them respectively. The projects received Rs572.25 million and Rs256.92 million respectively.

Despite being able to spend a huge chunk of the amount allocated to it, the MoE has already submitted its resource allocation plan for the next fiscal year based on the budget ceiling of Rs44.85 billion set by the National Planning Commission (NPC).

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 21 April 2015

‘Pancheshwor DPR by next year’

- DR PANTA

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Ranjit Rae on Monday said the detailed project report (DPR) on Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project would be prepared by next year as envisioned during the bilateral agreement. The two sides are going for a fresh DPR on the proposed project.

Underlining the project’s importance for both India and Nepal, Rae said India had already recruited staff for the joint project office in Mahendranagar of Kanchanpur district “The DPR would be made ready as soon as the Nepali side appoints its officials there,” Rae said. The Government of Nepal has not decided on the matter yet.

Inaugurating the buildings of Red Cross and Mahendra Higher Secondary School in [Dadeldhura](#), constructed with support of the Indian Government, Rae said the local people were also eagerly waiting for the speedy construction of the project. “All the stakeholders have put the misinterpretations of the past behind them and the working environment has been eased now.” Rae expressed belief that the construction works on the project would not be disrupted and suggested the Nepali side use human resources available locally for the project construction.

Giving an example of 280MW Dhauli Ganga Hydropower of Dharchula, India, Rae said the project like Pancheshwor could make the locals economically prosperous. He said the construction of the project along with proper utilisation of the natural resources in the far-western region could also help promote tourism in the area.

India would construct a bridge connecting Purnagiri in Indian border to Parashudham of [Dadeldhura](#) in a year, the envoy said adding that India was planning to build six bridges along the route of Sharada Corridor of Banbasa to Dharchula.