

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 13 Dec 2015

NEA's many hydropower projects may not complete on time due to fuel shortage

Construction of many hydropower projects started by Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has been affected by April 25 earthquake and due to fuel shortage following India's blockade, resulting in the failure to complete the projects on time.

Of the projects, Chameliya Hydropower, Upper Trisuli A, Kulekhani III and Rahughat have been hit hard by fuel shortage and the quake and that they may not be completed on time, authorities said.

NEA officials said that of them, the process to announce new bidding to resume the Rahughat hydropower project is underway after the previous contractor left midway without completing the project.

Likewise, Sher Singh Bhat, chief of production directorate of the authority, said that five-kilometers access road of the Upper Trisuli III A has been damaged by the quake and that it takes at least two years to complete it if halted works start immediately as per government's recent decision.

Meanwhile, speaking at the meeting of agriculture and hydropower committee under the Legislature-Parliament held today, officiating secretary at the Energy Ministry, Samir Ratna Shakya shared that the ministry already released a total of Rs 1.32 billion to reconstruct structures ravaged by the quake, but he said the failure for the board meeting of the authority to take place for long due to various reasons has made the matter worse.

Source: My Republica; 14 Dec 2015

NEA-ministry blame game delaying hydropower projects

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has said unnecessary hassles of Ministry of Energy were holding back hydropower development in the country.

Instead of facilitating hydropower development, the ministry has been creating hassles, a senior official of the power utility said at a parliamentary committee meeting on Sunday. Mukesh Raj Kafle, executive director of NEA, alleged that the ministry has imposed a blockade on NEA for the past three months. Speaking at the meeting of Agriculture and Water Resources Committee of the legislature-parliament, he said work on most of the hydropower projects have not resumed after the earthquake. Most of the under-construction hydropower projects have been stalled after the devastating earthquakes of April 25 and May 12. "NEA could not facilitate resumption of construction works stalled since the April earthquake," he told the committee.

Construction work of Upper Trishuli 3A has been stalled after the earthquake damaged the access road to the project site, Kafle said, adding that the ministry was not cooperating to open the access road. Some five-kilometer stretch of access road of Upper Trishuli 3A has been damaged by the quake. It takes at least two years to complete it, according to Kafle. Likewise, most of the other hydropower projects started by NEA have been affected due to the fuel shortage. Chameliya, Upper Trishuli A, Kulekhani III and Rahughat have been hit hard by fuel shortage and the earthquake.

NEA is planning to announce new bidding to resume Rahughat hydropower after the previous contractor left midway without completing the project.

Speaking at the meeting, Samir Ratna Shakya, officiating secretary of energy ministry, said that the ministry has already released a total of Rs 1.32 billion to reconstruct structures damaged by the earthquake.

Source: My Republica; 15 Dec 2015

Nepal Army to invest in hydropower project

The Nepalese Army (NA) is going to invest in hydropower production for the first time. The NA was ready to invest in 12.25 MW Madikhola Hydropower Project in Rolpa.

The budget programme of the current fiscal year and the white paper recently issued by Finance Minister, Bishnu Prasad Poudel, have incorporated the plan of mobilizing army in the hydropower sector.

The NA is to take the project, which was in 'basket fund' of the government for long, ahead but discussion regarding its modality was underway.

In today's meeting of the State Affairs Committee under the Legislature Parliament, Chief of Army Staff Rajendra Chhetri said that the NA has already sent a letter to the Ministry of Defense and Energy .

Ministry regarding the modality of the Madikhola Hydropower Project.

CoAS Chhetri said that they have been holding discussion with the ministries and the construction works of the project would be forwarded soon after the decision.

He further said that the NA was going to invest in the hydropower sector after lawmakers urged it to resolve the problem of energy crisis by utilizing the Army Welfare Fund. The Fund has Rs 35 billion.

On the occasion, lawmaker Gangalal Tuladhar urged the NA to involve in hydropower production, saying the existing energy crisis, facing by the country, would be resolved if the NA could forward the hydropower projects in a planned manner.

The government has decided to forward the Khimti-Dhalkebar transmission line after some problems were surfaced in distribution of compensation and land ownership during its construction, by mobilizing NA.

Likewise, lawmakers-- Aindra Sundar Nembang and Yagya Raj Sunuwar, Nabindra Raj Joshi, Rameshwor Phunyal, expressed the view that amount of the Army Welfare Fund could be utilized to resolve the energy crisis.

The Madikhola hydropower project incorporates three projects-- 12.25 MW Madichaour hydropower project, 8.4 MW Madi hydropower project and 3.6 MW Lower Madi hydropower project.

CoAS Chhetri informed that they would also involve in development construction on the basis of government's direction and supervision. RSS

Source: The Kathmandu Post; 15 Dec 2015

Energy sector suffers as ministry, NEA tussle

SANJEEV GIRI

A tussle between the Ministry of Energy (MoE) and the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has taken its toll on the development of the country's energy sector. The dispute couldn't have come at a worse time when the country is reeling under a severe power shortage with the winter season setting in, and fuel shipments from India sharply cut due to the embargo.

The sour relations between the line ministry and the authority has affected its functioning, and it has not been able to hold a board meeting for the past four months. As a result, various procurement processes, the signing of power purchase agreements (PPA), payments to contractors and extension of project deadlines, among other tasks, have come to a standstill.

The relations are so strained that the MoE does not even recognize Mukesh Raj Kafle as the managing director of the NEA, indicating that the dispute has been taken to a personal level.

Moreover, the ministry has not bothered to consult the NEA regarding the government's plan to declare an energy emergency and address the ongoing power crisis.

According to the NEA, the procurement of transformers and electricity meters, the supply of fuel for the construction of major projects including Upper Tamakoshi, and the construction of a 5-km road connecting the powerhouse of the Trishuli 3A Hydropower Project with the dam site, among other urgent tasks, have stalled due to the ministry's non-cooperation.

Major tasks like the construction of the Khimti-Barhabise 220/400 kV and Barhabise-Kathmandu 220/400 kV transmission line projects, Barhabise substation, Dana-Kusma 220 kV transmission line and substation at Dana, Kusma and a distribution master plan for the NEA, among others, are awaiting clearance from the NEA board.

The crux of the current crisis is the uneasy relations between the NEA chief and the MoE.

After former energy minister Radha Gyawali was sacked by the then Prime Minister Sushil Koirala at the recommendation of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for her alleged involvement in the Solu Corridor transmission line corruption scandal, the MoE led by the then deputy prime minister and energy minister Bam Dev Gautam had also implicated Kafle in the scam.

Gautam had ordered Kafle to report to the ministry. But Kafle had refused to join the ministry and filed a writ at the Supreme Court arguing that the CIAA had given him a clean chit. On November 22, the apex court ruled in favour of Kafle and also legitimized the actions he had performed while the case was in court.

Kafle and Gyawali had not got along well ever since she took over the ministry. Gyawali had conducted an evaluation as per the agreement between Kafle and the ministry which allowed the managing director to be sacked for bad performance.

Despite the court ruling in Kafle's favour, the ministry has refused to recognize him as the managing director of the NEA and entertain letters signed by him.

"This situation has had a severe impact as the NEA has not been able to move ahead with its plans," Kafle said. "The MoE has imposed an 'announced blockade' against the NEA which is against the spirit of this energy-hungry nation."

According to Kafle, the Supreme Court has already proven his legitimacy and he is ready to face the consequences if his involvement in any wrongdoing is proved. "The ongoing saga seems to be descending to a personal level. If I am guilty, I am ready to suffer the consequences. If not, this situation should end," Kafle said.

The ministry, however, is of the view that the court verdict has not freed him from reporting to the ministry. "The ministry has asked the managing director of the NEA to join the ministry, and he should comply with the directive of the line ministry," said Gokarna Panta, assistant spokesperson at the Energy

Ministry.

The ministry had directed the NEA's Deputy Managing Director Ram Chandra Pandey to take over as the officiating managing director. However, with Kafle continuing to stick to his post, Pandey has not been able to move in. The ministry has stated that they can only validate the letters signed by Pandey as he has been appointed as the officiating managing director.

Sour relations

- Relations are so strained that MoE does not even recognise Mukesh Raj Kafle as NEA MD
- Ministry has not bothered to consult NEA regarding plan to declare energy emergency
- NEA has not been able to hold a board meeting for the past four months
- Procurement processes, PPA signing, and payments to contractors have come to halt

Source: My Republica; 17 Dec 2015

222 MW can be added to grid this year: IPPAN

Independent power producers have said that as many as 17 projects with combined capacity of 222 MW can be completed in the current fiscal year if their goods stuck at different customs points at released at the earliest and they get fuel and construction materials unhindered.

These projects also include quake-hit projects like Upper Bhotekoshi Hydropower Project (45 MW).

Speaking at the meeting of Water Resources and Agriculture Committee of legislature-parliament on Thursday, Kumar Pandey, general secretary of Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN), said hydropower projects were facing problem in supply of fuel as well as construction materials. Also our electrical and mechanical equipment are stuck at the border, he added.

Other problems that independent power producers are facing, according to Pandey, are lack of coordination among government agencies and fine that they will have to pay as per the power purchase agreements.

IPPAN has also sought assurance from the government that their works won't be affected due to shortage of fuel or raw materials.

Upper Marshyangdi (50 MW), Upper Chaku A (22.2 MW), Upper Madi (19 MW) and Thapa Khola (11.2 MW) are the major projects expected to be completed within the current fiscal year.

Referring to Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), IPPAN has also sought soft loans for reconstruction and rehabilitation projects of over 80 MW damaged by the earthquake.

Different projects with combined capacity of 280 MW developed by private sector are in operation. Similarly, projects with capacity of 631 MW are under different stages of development. Likewise, other projects with total capacity of 990 MW are in the beginning phase after signing PPA with NEA.

If things go as planned, Chameliya (30 MW) and Kulekhani (30 MW), which are being developed by NEA, are expected to begin generation within this fiscal year.

Source: My Republica; 18 Dec 2015

Power to go off by 71 hrs a week from Saturday (with schedule)

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has decided to hike load shedding by 71 hours a week effective from Saturday.

With this new schedule, power will go off up to 10:15 hours a day in average, with additional hike in load-shedding by around two hours and 45 minutes to the previous schedule every day.

As per the earlier schedule, the daily power-cut was limited to eight hours a day and 56 hours a week. According to the NEA the load-shedding hours will go up as the water level in the rivers has decreased and those power houses destroyed by the earthquake have not yet come into operation. Besides, there is an increasingly high demand of electricity, resulting in the excessive load-shedding in the system.

Group/Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Group 1	04:00-08:00	06:00-10:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-14:00	05:00-08:00	04:30-08:00
	12:00-17:00	16:00-21:00	14:00-20:00	15:00-20:00	16:00-20:00	10:00-16:00	12:00-16:00
	20:00-22:00					20:00-22:00	20:00-22:30
Group 2	04:30-08:00	04:00-08:00	06:00-10:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-14:00	05:00-08:00
	12:00-16:00	12:00-17:00	16:00-21:00	14:00-20:00	15:00-20:00	16:00-20:00	10:00-16:00
	20:00-22:30	20:00-22:00					20:00-22:00
Group 3	05:00-08:00	04:30-08:00	04:00-08:00	06:00-10:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-14:00
	10:00-16:00	12:00-16:00	12:00-17:00	16:00-21:00	14:00-20:00	15:00-20:00	16:00-20:00
	20:00-22:00	20:00-22:30	20:00-22:00				
Group 4	08:00-14:00	05:00-08:00	04:30-08:00	04:00-08:00	06:00-10:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00
	16:00-20:00	10:00-16:00	12:00-16:00	12:00-17:00	16:00-21:00	14:00-20:00	15:00-20:00
		20:00-22:00	20:00-22:30	20:00-22:00			
Group 5	08:00-12:00	08:00-14:00	05:00-08:00	04:30-08:00	04:00-08:00	06:00-10:00	08:00-12:00
	15:00-20:00	16:00-20:00	10:00-16:00	12:00-16:00	12:00-17:00	16:00-21:00	14:00-20:00
			20:00-22:00	20:00-22:30	20:00-22:00		
Group 6	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-14:00	05:00-08:00	04:30-08:00	04:00-08:00	06:00-10:00
	14:00-20:00	15:00-20:00	16:00-20:00	10:00-16:00	12:00-16:00	12:00-17:00	16:00-21:00
				20:00-22:00	20:00-22:30	20:00-22:00	
Group 7	06:00-10:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-12:00	08:00-14:00	05:00-08:00	04:30-08:00	04:00-08:00
	16:00-21:00	14:00-20:00	15:00-20:00	16:00-20:00	10:00-16:00	12:00-16:00	12:00-17:00
					20:00-22:00	20:00-22:30	20:00-22:00

Source: The Himalayan Times; 18 Dec 2015

NEA increases power outage to 10 hours

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has increased power outage to up to 10 hours a day starting Friday.

The existing load shedding hours is eight-and-a-half hours a day.

The increment in the daily power cut is attributed to the reduced water levels in the river and increasing demand for power, shared Bhuwan Kumar Khattri, chief of Load Dispatch Centre, NEA.

With the revised load shedding schedule, there will be 70 hours of power cut per week with adjusted timetable for the power cut in the morning and evening in view of public convenience.

Although a total of 43 operating hydro electricity projects produce some 718 megawatts of electricity in the country, the power production drops by 50 per cent during the winter as many such projects are run-of-the-river type, as per NEA.

Only 300 megawatts of electricity is being transmitted to the central transmission line. Some 230 megawatts of power is being imported from India at present.

The power demand in the country has soared to 1,800 megawatts following the border blockade as the import of fuel, including LPG gas, has been disrupted.