

Source: My Republica, 15 April 2018

## **1,117 families get electricity as Jhakadigadh project completes**

There is light in Wards 8, 9 and 10 of Budhiganga Municipality now, as electricity production has commenced from the Jhakadigadh River in far-western Bajura district. Locals have been overjoyed as their houses and neighborhoods have been brightened on Nepali New Year 2075.

The 100 KW Jhakadigadh micro-hydro power plant has lit houses of more than 1,117 families, according to Dharma Raj Jaishi, mayor of Budhiganga Municipality.

Most of the houses of the municipality have been connected to the power grid and the remaining ones will be connected by mid-May, according to Jhakadigadh's project chief, Ram Bahadur Baniya.

Locals, who were previously using solar and other sources of energy, are happy with the installation of hydro power at their houses, according to Budhiganga Municipality Ward 9 Chairperson, Bharat Thapa. The Alternative Energy Development Board had provided Rs 20.55 million in grant to construct this project. Likewise, the special infrastructural development fund of then parliamentarian Karna Bahadur Thapa had provided Rs 5.7 million, and an additional Rs 3.2 million came from then District Development Committee, Bajura. The total investment for the project so far has been Rs 34.7 million. According to Baniya, the total cost of the project is Rs 50 million. "More than Rs 10 million remains to be paid for project construction. These funds have not yet been managed till now. A bulk of the work here has been done on loan that needs to be paid. Moreover, locals had donated 25 days of labor so that the project could come into operation."

Baniya added: "I have been seeking funds to repay the debt which seems to be a great issue at this point. However, I am glad that I could bestow upon the dreams of Budhiganga Municipality locals of seeing their town lit."

According to Baniya, the project will be providing electricity at rates less than that set by Nepal Electricity Authority. He further aims to generate 400 KW of electricity from different sections of the river to give access to electricity to the residents of all 10 municipalities of the district.

Source: The Himalayan Times, 16 April 2018

## **Govt plans to sign energy pact with Bangladesh**

The Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation is preparing to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bangladesh to strengthen energy cooperation between the two countries. Nepal and Bangladesh have been talking on bilateral energy cooperation since the power trade agreement (PTA) was signed with India in 2014. Nepal has identified Bangladesh as a prospective market for hydroelectricity, which is a clean and renewable source of energy.

Following the SAARC member states agreement on 'SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity)' in November 2014, Nepal and Bangladesh have seen the prospects of bilateral power cooperation. Recently, Energy Minister Barshaman Pun also said that the government is preparing to sign an MoU on energy cooperation with Bangladesh through which the country can lure investment from Bangladesh to exploit Nepal's hydro resources.

However, to materialise power trade between the two nations, Nepal and Bangladesh need to hold talks with India. As there is power trade between Nepal and India, and also Bangladesh and India, power trade between Nepal and Bangladesh is not a far-fetched notion, according to Ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal, Mashfee Binte Shams.

Talking to The Himalayan Times, Ambassador Shams said that both countries are preparing to sign an MoU on energy cooperation and they can enter into a power trade agreement, which is a more specific document. However, trilateral consensus is must for the PTA to be signed.

There is prospect of energy trade between Nepal and Bangladesh as GMR Energy India has signed MoU to sell power produced from Upper Karnali Hydropower Project, which is going to be developed under Indian investment to Bangladesh. For this purpose, an initial MoU regarding connection agreement has already been signed with Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) during the visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in April last year.

Bangladesh's current electricity generation stands at around 16,000 megawatts and it will require around 34,000 megawatts of power by 2030 to sustain the high economic growth of above seven per cent.

As participating nations have envisioned providing access to sustainable, clean and affordable energy to their citizens by 2030 under the Sustainable Development Goals, Bangladesh has taken Nepal's hydroelectricity as a reliable source for the rising demand of clean and reliable energy, as per Ambassador Shams.

Energy consumption is relatively low in South Asia as per capita energy consumption stands at 650 kilowatt hours (units) compared to global average energy consumption of 3,000 kilowatt hours.

Source: The Himalayan Times, 16 April 2018

## **Hydro licence to be revoked if construction of project delayed**

The government has said it will cancel the licence of those hydropower projects that do not start construction activities as scheduled. Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), Barshaman Pun, stated that if promoters of hydropower projects do not start constructing the projects on time then the government will revoke their licences.

“This is the time to rebuild the nation and move towards economic prosperity,” Pun stated, adding that it is time now to build mega and small hydropower projects at any cost within the set timeline. He informed that the government is collecting data on those hydropower projects that have received licences within the last five years.

“The process of providing licences to hydropower developers needs to be streamlined and we are planning to provide licences to only those promoters who have the capacity to make investments in a time bound manner,” Minister Pun added.

According to Pun, MoEWRI is gathering information on those investors who have acquired the licence to develop hydropower projects but have not started any work yet. “Once they have been identified we will publish their names and take action against them.”

“It is a sad situation that there are investors who are capable of building hydropower projects but do not have the licence to do so and there are some who have been holding on to their licences without doing anything tangible,” Pun mentioned.

The minister further added that the government will look at the five-year work schedule of all hydropower developers and will cancel the licences of those that have not achieved even a year’s target. He also mentioned that if the government finds any person holding a licence trying to sell it for a profit then the licence will be revoked immediately.

The Ministry for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation is committed to building hydropower projects with installed capacity of 10,000 megawatts within 10 years and this measure that we have initiated is the first step to achieving that goal, Pun stated.

The minister further added that the 99-point guideline introduced by the previous energy minister Janardan Sharma in 2015 to improve the energy sector of the country will be given continuity.

“Meanwhile, we are drafting a plan on how we can domestically consume the 10,000 megawatts of hydropower we plan to develop,” Minister Pun said. “If we have surplus power then we plan to sell it to India, China and Bangladesh.”

He further added that once the goal of generating 10,000 megawatts of power is achieved, the government will try to replace vehicles running on fossil fuels with electric vehicles. “The government is doing its best to promote electric vehicles.”

Source: The Himalayan Times, 19 April 2018

## **Nepal-India energy secretary-level talks end**

Nepal-India energy secretary-level talks, also called the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting, concluded in New Delhi on Tuesday with an agreement to finalise the construction modality of a new 400 kV Butwal-Gorakhpur cross-border transmission line within three months. The meeting was led by Anup Kumar Upadhyay, secretary at the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI) and his Indian counterpart Ajay Kumar Bhalla from the Ministry of Power.

According to Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, spokesperson for MoEWRI, the meeting has agreed to authorise the preparation of the construction modality of the cross-border transmission line to Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Central Electricity Authority of India (CEA).

A Nepal-India joint technical group will prepare the building modality of this project. During the JSC meeting, Nepal proposed that both countries take the initiative to individually construct the transmission lines that fall in their respective territories and the meeting also urged the technical committee to recommend the funding modality to the JSC, Ghimire added.

As per Ghimire, India has shown keen interest in constructing the Butwal-Gorakhpur transmission line and assured to pay the total construction cost. He further added that since Nepal will have surplus energy after three years, India has agreed to buy electricity from Nepal after that period.

Meanwhile, the JSC meeting has also principally agreed to establish energy banking system. Nepal had put forward a proposal for the system and the Indian authorities have agreed to this vision, Ghimire informed. “CEA will hold discussions with the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar governments on how this concept can be taken forward.

Ghimire added, the meeting also agreed to set up another 50 kV transformer at Tanakpur substation and import additional 40 megawatts of power from India. At present, Nepal has been importing 30 megawatts of power through the Tanakpur substation. “India has also agreed to bear the cost of land acquisition and investment to set up the new transformer.”

Also, there was an agreement to convert the single-circuit Kataiya-Kusaha and Raxaul-Parwanipur transmission lines to double-circuit under the grant aid of the Indian government. Nepal also proposed to import additional 50 megawatts of electricity through each of the above mentioned transmission lines during the JSC meeting. The Indian side has taken the proposal positively and they have assured to do the needful, as per Ghimire.

Likewise, the JSC meeting has also agreed to conduct a study on two other cross-border transmission lines — Duhabi-Purnia and Lamki-Bareilly — that are included in the energy master plan agreed between the two countries. It will be studied by the joint technical team within three months.

During the meeting, JSC officials also agreed to study and upgrade existing 132 kVA and 33 kVA transmission lines in Dhangadhi, Nepalgunj and Bhairahawa.

The next meeting of the Joint Steering Committee is scheduled for either September or October.