

NEWS:

Agitation holds work at Parbati-III HEP Work at NHPC's 520 MW Parbati-III hydroelectric project has been stopped due to local agitation at the project site. The representatives of Project Affected Families have stopped work on the project since April 01, 2013. The major demand is for providing regular employment in NHPC. NHPC had acquired 45.80 ha land for project development. There are 75 families covered under rehabilitation and resettlement plan. So far, NHPC has not given any employment directly to any of the project affected family at the project. The project authorities informed the NHPC Board that since the project is very near to the completion, the project cannot afford any agitation by the project affected families. Hence, some solution is necessary to end the stalemate. Parbati-III on River Sainj involves construction of four units of 130 MW each. (www.hydraworld.com 230513)

HP seeks Rs 1,365-cr compensation for delay in Jangi Thopan HEP The Himachal Pradesh government has claimed Rs 1,365 crore in damages from Brakel Corporation of Netherlands for the delay in execution of the 980-mw Jangi Thopan Powari hydroelectric project. The private developer had bagged the project by quoting the highest upfront premium payment to the state in an auction held in 2005. The state cabinet in its meeting on April 23, 2013 decided to invite fresh bids for the project rather than award it to the second highest bidder, Reliance Infrastructure. The Himachal HC in 2009 ruled illegal allocation of the project to Brakel, which was found guilty by the court of misrepresenting facts relating to eligibility. The court also found that Brakel had taken huge loans from the Adani Group before paying upfront premium, which it later agreed to convert into equity. The matter was brought up before the HC by Reliance Infrastructure. Brakel challenged the HC verdict in the Supreme Court, where the matter is still pending. The state initiated two-stage bidding in 2005 for the selection of developers for Jangi-Thopan and Thopan-Powari hydroelectric projects of 480 mw each (the two project have been merged for rebidding). (Financial Express 080513)

NHPC perplexed over NRLDC's orders on Chamera-II & III A bizarre case of the gulf between top-down power generation planning by Northern regional load despatch centre (NRLDC) and the operational ground reality has come to light. Chamera-II & III of NHPC are cascading hydro power plants on the Ravi River in Himachal Pradesh. The distance between upstream Chamera-III Power House and downstream Chamera-II Dam is only about 1.5 KM with no major tributary or water source contributing in-between. The storage capacity at Chamera-II reservoir is very low. The generating units at Chamera-II Power Station are almost fully dependent on the release from Chamera-III Power Station. The agenda note from NHPC for the NRLDC meeting, scheduled for May 16-17, says: "It is observed that schedules given by RLDC for the month of May 2013 for Chamera-II & III are not in a coordinated way. At some occasions, power station in the downstream plant is being asked to maintain maximum generation while the upstream power station is asked to generate minimum or zero." (energylineindia.com 160513) This also raises the issue of optimizing of peaking power from these stations, which is clearly not happening with such scheduling by the NRLDC.

Dams may trigger more quakes in Kashmir: Experts The presence of massive dams in Chenab Valley may prove catastrophic for people living in the region as it may have triggered the recent earthquakes, experts said. "Dams may trigger earthquakes," noted Indian seismologist Prof Vinod Kumar Gaur said. He said though dams do not cause earthquakes, they help trigger them. "Due to dams, a quake that could occur later can occur early," Gaur said.

Two people were killed and over 80 others injured while scores of buildings damaged in the Chenab valley when an earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter Scale, with epicenter near Kishtwar town in Chenab valley, shook the region earlier this month. After the quake, Gaur was in Bhaderwah area of Chenab valley for reconnaissance of installing seismometers, instruments that measure motions of the ground, including those of seismic waves generated by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other seismic sources.

On October 8, 2005, Pakistan administered Kashmir witnessed a major earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter Scale killing at least 75,000 people. Kashmir witnessed the last

big earthquake in 1555, and, according to experts, a massive quake is looming in the region. Kashmir has a number of dams including Baglihar, Dulhasti, Kishanganga-II, Pakal Dul, Salal (Rockfill And Concrete Dam), Sewa-II and Sewa-III. A number of dams are being constructed in Chenab valley. Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Limited (KLSPDCL) presently has 20 hydroelectric projects with installed capacity of 758.70 MW.

Head of the Earth Sciences Department at the University of Kashmir (KU) Prof Shakeel Ahmad Ramsoo said that occurrence of earthquakes in regions having dams was making the local populace highly vulnerable. "In Chenab valley, the government has plans for a cascade of dams. Life and property of people living in areas near these dams are in serious danger," he said. He said every hydropower project should be subjected to the environment checks and how the power projects were going to change the disaster profile of the region needed to be studied. (Rising Kashmir 090513)

AJYCP Protests against Lower Demwe HEP The Tinsukia district committee of the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba-Chatra Parishad has voiced its protest against the construction of 1750 MW Lower Demwe dam over the Lohit river in Arunachal Pradesh in the upper region of the Parashuram Kunda. Reacting to the permission given by the Central Forest and Environment Ministry, the Parishad stated that the Ministry has given the permission without considering the probable plight of the people downstream in the future. The AJYCP stated that it would continue its stir vigorously against such anti-people projects. It burnt the effigy of Jayanti Natarajan, Union Minister of Forest and Environment on May 21.

The students of Tinsukia under the banner of the Tinsukia Zila Chatra Santha burnt the symbolic copy of the permission of the Forest and Environment Ministry, Government of India. The student body stated that before giving the permission, the ministry should have heard the opinions of the people living in the downstream areas of the river as the dam would cause problems for them. It demanded withdrawal of the permission and warned of continuing its stir if the demand was not met. (Assam Tribune 220513)

Arunachal Pradesh scraps power deal with Naveen Jindal Group Arunachal Pradesh has decided to reverse its contentious decision in 2009 to give 49% equity in its hydro-power corporation to the Naveen Jindal Group. The decision, taken in April 2013, came after a backlash from government departments and other companies having hydel projects in the state against the joint venture, which was a departure from precedent as it effectively gave the Naveen Jindal Group a stake in every upcoming hydel project in Arunachal.

"The (Arunachal) cabinet has decided to ask the Jindal Group to return its shares," Arunachal Chief Secretary HK Paliwal said. Sometime in 2009, the cabinet of the Congress government, led by Dorjee Khandu, had cleared the sale of 49% in the Hydro Power Development Corporation of Arunachal Pradesh Limited (HPDCAPL) to the Naveen Jindal Group. The state, through HPDCAPL, had committed to 11-26% equity contribution in every hydel project coming up in Arunachal, including those of other private players, adding 38,600 mw by March 2009. How the state decided to award equity in HPDCAPL to a private player in general and Jindal in particular, is not clear. According to Paliwal, Arunachal will need Rs 13,000 crore to meet its 26% equity commitment in all the hydel projects coming up in the state. So far, this north-eastern state, whose total annual budget in 2012-13 was of Rs 3,535 crore, is yet to invest anything in any of the projects.

But this arrangement not only gave Jindal greater equity control over its own projects, but also minority control in the projects of other players. According to a senior official in the state power department, the special purpose vehicle running the HPDCAPL-Jindal JV had four directors. "One was to be the managing director of HPDCAPL, the other three were from Jindal." (The Economic Times 030513) The whole deal between Arunachal Pradesh Govt and Jindals and its cancellation smells of big scam, considering no information is available as to what were amounts

transacted at the time of formation and cancellation of the deal and what all happened in the intervening four years.

NTPC faces the brunt from NBWL for forest diversion of Koldam project With an investment of Rs 5,400 crore on NTPC's Koldam Hydro Power project in Himachal Pradesh, the National board of Wildlife (NBWL) in March 2013 rightly disapproved the diversion of 124.05 hectares of forest land falling in the Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary. NTPC has sought the State Government's intervention for early resolution so that it can facilitate commencement of reservoir impounding by September this year as well as attain the project commissioning target in 2014. NTPC falsely claims that the need for diversion only arose after the commencement of the project, when 124.054 ha of previously approved forest land was made part of Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary during re-survey and demarcation in 2006-07. Even if this were the case (which is really not the situation), what was NTPC doing for so many years since 2006-07? Why did it not wait for getting the NBWL clearance before going ahead with the work? NTPC has previously embarked on a land diversion to the tune of 954.69 hectares for the project, as per the recommendations of NBWL. The State forest department approved the diversion as late as in March 2012. (energylineindia.com 010513)

ADB's first private sector Hydro investment in India The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is investing \$30 million equity in NSL Renewable Power Private Ltd. (NRPPL), a renewable energy company in India, to support hydropower and wind power projects. NRPPL will use the investment proceeds to partially finance the 100 MW Tidong hydropower project in Himachal Pradesh. This is ADB's first private sector hydropower assistance in India. The investment agreement between ADB and NRPPL was signed on May 1, 2013. NRPPL belongs to the NSL group, which includes Nuziveedu Seeds Limited, the largest seed company in India. By Dec 2012, NRPPL had 185 MW of operational projects (including hydro, wind, biomass & solar power), with an additional 336 MW under construction or development. (www.adb.org 010513)