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Editorial



When will Energy Sector be serious about appalling condition?

Instead of reaping substantial benefits from the exploitation of water resources in Nepal, we are facing 14 hours of daily load-shedding, and the 'dry season' is yet to come. All businesses and especially industrial development will suffer drastically; hence, load-shedding is unacceptable to the Nepali people. Government officials – the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) – forecast that load-shedding will go away after commissioning of 456MW Upper Tamakoshi HEP; whereas the reality is not so. One senior officer from the NEA recently informed the Public Account Committee of Parliament that if things do not improve, load-shedding will not go away in his life time. This is the reality that demonstrates the very seriousness of the situation.

Who is to blame for this debacle? We are all to blame.

For one, the NEA is to blame for not being able to reduce about 27% electricity losses in the system and for not being able to control incurring double time and cost overrun in Mid-Marshyandhi HEP (70MW) construction. Similarly, there are time and cost overruns in Chamelia (30MW) and Kulekhani III HEP (14MW) construction. It has been more than 2 years since the GON/NEA announced intent to pursue speedy repairs to Duhabi Multifuel (39MW), which will still take several more months.

More blame falls to other facts. For example, no hydro development will be feasible at a bank interest rate of more than 15% per annum. The Electricity Tariff Fixation Commission has yet to come up with tariff revision. Several developers are waiting to see adequate revision of Power Purchase Agreement Rates. Most of the local people have forwarded unrealizable demands to the developers. The Department of Electricity Development (DoED) is mainly focusing on awarding licenses for nominal royalties, instead of adopting and implementing River Basin Wise Hydro Development principles. The Water Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) could not be activated to perform its effective role to reduce load-shedding. Further, it has been working for the last three years on drafting a National Energy Strategy, which is still not completed or approved. And neither the Forest Department nor the Department of Conservation of Parks and Wildlife are hydro-power friendly.

It is to be noted that long hours of load-shedding is a curse for Nepali people both socially and economically. Those responsible need to realize that our combined inability and negligence is harming the society and the country very much. Any mistakes that have been committed need to be corrected.

Lenin once said "Communism is Soviet power plus Electrification." In 2008, the former Maoist led government in Nepal, knowing the importance of hydro-power, declared a target of 10,000MW in 10 years, a challenge that created great vibrancy in the sector. We wonder why then there are so many obstructions in hydro development created by the Maoist party as are now being reported in the media?

With support from all quarters, it is possible to remove various hurdles/barriers which are on the way to speedy energy resources development. The greatest requirement is the political WILL POWER.

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Lastly, in a bid to improve the quality of articles in this journal, from this issue we have reorganized our Editorial Team to include prominent experts from across the Globe.

Jeewan P. Thanju, Editor-in-Chief