

Editorial

Imphal, Friday June 2, 2017

Drainage system: draining resources

During the best of times, the drainage system in the state, particularly in the valley areas has been a makeshift one. The activities surrounding the development of the drainage system has evidently been focused on distribution and management of the work rather than on the real purpose or end result of the work. The result is for all to see. Cracked and seeping walls, crumbling concrete, disjointed drains and choked channels. Of all these unfortunate aberrations being practiced by various government departments from the prescribed procedures of implementation, the one single biggest eyesore would undoubtedly be the unending works on the 'Imphal sewer project' even after more than twelve years of listless execution and clueless implementation. While the IFC Minister publicly declared that the project is heading for completion in a couple of months, the ground reality tells a different story.

For the lakhs of residents who have been subjected to much inconvenience and even physical perils for more than a decade due to the unsystematic and haphazard working methods being carried out at the sites of the project, the projections of the IFC minister, made a few months back carries very little hope and certainly rings hollow, as had happened umpteen times in the past.

The incessant rain over the last few days has caused flooding and overflowing of rivers in various parts of the valley resulting in extensive damages to crops and properties. The incidence of flood in the state was quite uncommon, if not rare a few years back. But the increasing frequency and regularity of the disaster should be taken note of and accord the seriousness of consideration it deserves. Makeshift embankments, last minute frantic exercises in containing seepages and commencement of drainage works to coincide with the arrival of the monsoon have become the norm rather than the exception when it comes to activities of the concern departments in dealing with the recurring flood situations in the state. Inspection visits to flooded areas and show of sympathy to the flood-affected victims are all very well. Better still is the financial largesse shelled out from time to time to a few of these unfortunate victims and adequately covered by the media.

But in its overarching effort to cultivate a caring image, the state government failed to address the reality. While contract works were drawn up with practiced efficiency, the actual implementation or objective of the work was lost in the melee. The new state government has so far shown promise and a positive vibe to suggestions. And the suggestion Imphaltimes would very much like to put up through this editorial is that the much delayed Sewer project should be looked into and made necessary changes and alterations in consultation with technical experts so that the whole exercise can be brought to a beneficial conclusion and that the practicality and objective of the project is achieved. The public is prepared to extend any and all assistance and cooperation to see the project through thereby bringing to a closure an unending bad dream.

Driving License lost

I, the undersigned, have lost the driving license issued by Transport Government of Manipur bearing Registration No. MN-0000000004029, on the way between Jiri Parking to Uripok on May 30, 2017

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India's major drive towards clean energy

By : Anupama Airy

Ramping up its renewable and nuclear energy programmes tremendously over the past three years reflects the government's commitment to prioritise the use of clean power in India's energy mix. India has already made significant strides on the Renewable Energy sector especially on the solar power front, a move that has put it on the world's energy map. As the government marks three years of its governance, the recent decision to add 7 GW (or 7,000 mw) power capacity as nuclear power, the largest ever approval granted towards India's domestic nuclear power programme in one go, depicts the government's seriousness and commitment towards a sustainable low carbon growth strategy.

India's current nuclear power capacity stands at 6.7 GW (or 6,780 mw) and the recent approval to build 10 new atomic reactors of 700 mw each will boost India's nuclear power addition program in a big way. Another 6.7 GW (or 6,700 mw) of nuclear power projects are under construction and are expected to go on stream by 2021-22.

With likely manufacturing orders of close to Rs 70,000 crore to the domestic companies, the project is expected to help transform Indian nuclear industry and likely generate more than 33,400 jobs in direct and indirect employment.

On the renewable energy front, the numbers say it all.

When Union Minister of State for Power, RE, Coal and Mines, Piyush Goyal took over the reins of these crucial energy sectors in 2014, the

solar power capacity in India stood at a mere 2.65 GW (or 2,650 MW). Within three years and as the NDA government completes three years in power, India's solar power capacity has increased by a phenomenal 4.5 times to more than 12.2 GW (or 12,200 MW).

What is further significant to note here is that India's solar power tariff that stood at over Rs 13 per unit in 2014 has fallen drastically and set a new record by hitting an historic low of Rs 2.44 per unit at a recent auction of 500 megawatt (MW) of capacity at the Bhadla solar park in Rajasthan. This by any standards is a laudable achievement for India that has recently climbed up to the 26th position in World Bank's electricity accessibility ranking in the current year from 99th spot in 2014.

Interestingly, solar power in India is now cheaper than the thermal or coal based power that has been the mainstay of India's power sector. Even India's largest power generation company—NTPC's average cost of power is higher than what has been achieved on the solar front.

Setting aside the doubts that have been raised, from within the industry and experts, on the sustainability of such low tariffs, Union minister of state for power, RE, coal and mines, Piyush Goyal said in a recent interview, "About the unsustainable level of the price, I have heard that story for the last three years every time we determined a lower price. I heard it when 12 cents became 10 when 10 became 8 when 8 became 5 and today we are at 4."

Enthusied by this drop in renewable energy tariffs, Goyal is confident that soon India's 60-65% of installed power generation capacity will be green energy. "Going by prices we have discovered, I am inspired to say that 60-65 per cent of India's installed capacity base will be green energy," Minister Goyal said recently.

It is also significant to point here that presently, India boats of housing the world's largest ground based solar plant and also the world's largest rooftop solar plant that are both in India.

On the wind power capacity front, India has overtaken countries like UK, Canada and France and reached 4th position in wind installed capacity after China, USA and Germany. India saw the highest ever wind capacity addition of 5.5 GW in 2016-17 with a record wind tariff of Rs. 3.46 per unit achieved to ensure affordable green power for all.

Talking of India's renewable capacity as a whole including solar, wind, small hydro and bio-power, the same has witnessed a two third increase in just three years – from 35 GW to 57 GW. The government is targeting 100 GW of solar and 60 GW of wind energy capacity by 2022. India's total renewable energy generation capacity is envisaged at 175 GW by 2022.

A Comparison of present solar power capacity with what existed in 2014 shows a 370% increase. From 2621 mw in 2014, India's current solar power capacity as on March 2017 stood at 12,277 mw. Similarly, wind power capacity addition has seen a jump of 52% from 21,042 mw to 32,304 mw as on

March 2017. A 14% increase each in small hydro and bio-power has also been witnessed during the same period.

The three major reforms in RE sector can be summed up as follows;

Wind sector - This sector has been moved from fixed tariff regime to competitive bidding leading to reduction in power cost by around 20%; Solar power has become affordable and tariff has been reduced by more than 75% by using plug and play model through solar parks. The third is on India reclaiming the title of Jagatguru by leading the solar revolution in the world through formation of International Solar Alliance.

In rural India, while the government's programme of electrifying all villages by the end of this calendar year (defying its own target of December 2018) is going full-stream, solar power's contribution cannot be overlooked considering that as many as 10 lakh solar lamps have been distributed to students to enable them to study in the absence of electricity. That apart, providing affordable power to farmers by installing solar pumps is another major achievement of this government in the past three years. While in March 2014, around 11,000 solar pumps had been installed, this number has reached around 1.1 lakh solar pumps. The NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has achieved almost 9 times the number achieved since independence.

Courtesy PIB Feature

National and International News

Indian army successfully test fires nuclear capable ballistic missile Prithvi-II off Odisha coast

Bhubaneswar, June 2: India on Friday successfully test-fired the land version of the short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile Prithvi-II from a defence base off Odisha coast.

Defence sources said that it was mounted on a Mobile Tatra transporter-erector Launcher (MTL). The indigenously built ballistic missile Prithvi-II was fired from the launching complex - III (LC-III) of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur-on-sea at about 9.50 am.

"As part of user training exercises, the test was conducted by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) of the Indian Army with logistics support from DRDO. The missile used for the test was picked randomly from the assembly line. Carrying a dummy payload, it covered the desired striking range and met all mission objectives successfully," said an official.

Defence sources said the 9-metre-

high and one-metre-thick missile, with a launch weight of 4.6 tonnes, developed by DRDO, has a strike range of up to 350 km. Powered by liquid propellant, Prithvi-II can operate with both liquid as well as solid fuel.

The missile, made from aluminum alloy and with its wings fashioned from magnesium, has been inducted into the 333-missile regiment of the Indian Army. This missile has the capability to carry a payload of up to 1,000 kg but if the same was reduced by half, the striking range could be enhanced.

The Prithvi missile can be taken close to the forward line over any kind of terrain. It has been designed to deliver advanced conventional warheads deep into enemy territory. The missile stops climbing when it reaches an altitude of 30 km and dives towards the target at an 80 degree angle.

It uses an inertial guidance system with good accuracy while the

warhead uses a radar correlation terminal guidance system. It can hit mobile targets, including unmanned aerial vehicles.

The missile packs a punch and is capable of inflicting heavy damage

to forward airfields and destroy mechanised forces held back as reserves. Prithvi was first test fired in 1988 and inducted into the armed forces in 2003. At present, nearly 30 missiles are manufactured each year for all versions of the Prithvi.

Afghanistan blames Haqqani network, ISI for Kabul blast

Islamabad, June 2: The Afghan intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), said on Thursday that early findings showed the Haqqani network with the assistance of Pakistan's ISI carried out the attack in Kabul that killed at least 90 people.

"These terrorists once again proved they don't represent any religion and they only carry out such coward attacks to please their Pakistani masters which is against all Islamic and human rights principals," the

NDS said in a statement on Thursday.

The Haqqani network has carried out a number of kidnappings and attacks against US interests in Afghanistan.

The group is also blamed for several deadly attacks against Indian interests in Afghanistan, including the 2008 bombing of the Indian mission in Kabul that killed 58 people.

Afghanistan also cancelled proposed home and away cricket fixtures with Pakistan after the Kabul bombing.

Pakistan were set to play their first Twenty20 match in Kabul later this year in what was seen as an opportunity for the neighbours to ease tensions over border skirmishes and alleged proxy warfare.

The Kabul match, set for July or August, would have been followed by a fixture in Pakistan and a full series at an unspecified date.

But the Afghanistan Cricket Board issued a strongly worded statement late on Wednesday, cancelling the matches in light of a truck bombing in the city's diplomatic quarter that killed at least 90 people.

No group has claimed responsibility for Wednesday's attack, although the Taliban has denied involvement. "The ACB hereby cancel all kinds of cricket matches and initial mutual relationship agreement with the Pakistan Cricket Board," the Afghan board said on its Facebook page.

"No agreement of friendly matches and mutual relationship agreement is possible with a country where terrorists are housed and provided safe havens."

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