City's own power plant will take a few more months for completion

The delay is being attributed to 'contractual issues and mobilisation of men and material'.

K.C. DEEPika
Bengaluru

The Yelahanka combined cycle power plant — touted to be the city's first own power plant — is behind schedule. Construction was inaugurated by the then chief minister Siddaramaiah in June 2016. The plant was supposed to be ready by May 2018. Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd (KPCL) officials said the plant will be commissioned in a couple of months.

The 370 MW plant, which is being implemented under the de
tunct diesel plant, is gas-based and was set to cost around Rs 3,570 crore.

KPCL officials blamed the delay on contractual issues and mobilisation of fuel and material. However, officials refused to divulge if the delay had pushed up the cost of the project.

"Everything needed, including gas, water and power evacuation, is ready. It will be commissioned this year for sure," said a senior official.

'Stranded asset'

A recent report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEE
FA) had deemed the project 'on-track for a delayed commissioning'.

"A sub-scale base-load imported gas-fired power plant at an operating rate of less than 25% will be commercially unviable and will result in a stranded asset. The constant failure of mega-size gas-based plants in Karnataka points at an obvious unne
cessity and unviability of gas-fired base-load power," the report said.

The IEEFA pitched instead for the plant to manage peak power requirements. They rising share of renewables in the country and in Karnata
ka, a gas plant for peak-power requirements makes more commercial sense. The Yelahanka plant might have to be converted to a flexible peak-hour power facility in order to avoid another commercial fiasco. Gas, in the near term, could only be an option for peak-hour usage with a differen
tial wholesale tariff in place for peaking gas-fired plants.

'Has various advantages'

Kumar G. Naik, MD, KPCL, defended the project saying the plant would 'bring in grid stability, lower transmission losses (power is transmitted to Bengaluru from Ballari, Raichur and other parts of the country), and help manage sudden re
quirement of peak load man 
agement by enabling starting or stopping supply more easi
ly'.

"The idea is to have a mix of energy resources, and not just coal or water-based," he said.

The IEEFA's suggestion to keep the plant for peak-hour usage would end up result
ing in loss of energy, he said.

'Not as bad as diesel'

He allayed fears of pollution. "Gas is not as polluting as diesel. There will be zero effluents going out of the plant's premises," he said.

On fears of Jakkur lake be
ing in danger because of the power plant, he said, "The lake will also get water, and so will the plant."
Ten-fold hike planned in rates for water drawn to produce power

Bosky Khanna

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Limited has submitted a proposal to the state government for hiking the tariff for water drawn to generate electricity. The government has already jacked up the tariff for industries by 100-fold citing the recommendations of the Nigam.

At the recently held meeting chaired by chief secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar, it was decided to hike the rates Karnataka Power Corporation Limited pays to draw water from dams belonging to major irrigation department to generate electricity. It was decided to hike the rate from 10 paise per unit to Rs 1 per unit - when electricity is generated and supplied to the grid.

Officials from KBJNL and the core committee, which tabled the proposal on behalf of the major irrigation department, told DH that the hike had been proposed to raise money for irrigation projects. The officials maintained that there was no objection for the proposal. They added that there was also no need to consult anyone in this regard as it had been done on the directions of the government.

The core committee took three years to conclude on the tariff and the file is now awaiting concurrence from the finance department. The measure is likely to have a ripple effect on the electricity tariff, since the Energy department would cite this hike while moving the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission for tariff revision.

G Kumar Naik, KPCL Managing Director, said that he was aware of the proposal. He said that the increase in rates would be applicable to all the power generation units at Almatti and Bhadra reservoirs, since they are under the irrigation department. He added that the hike would come into effect only after written orders were issued.

The KBJNL has however not yet hiked the rates for drawing water from canals and waterfalls. At present, the water is allowed to drawn free for power generation up to 25 MW.

INNOSTATIONS IN RENEWABLE SECTOR NEEDED

New Delhi: With thermal power generation creating environmental concerns, AIADMK leader M Thambidurai on Friday stressed on the need for innovation and new tech in the renewable energy space to push India's economic development. "There is a resource shortage in hydro sector, while thermal creates pollution and environmental concerns. So, the innovations and new technologies in the renewable energy sector will usher a new era in the country's economic development," the LS deputy speaker said. There is a commitment to increase the share of non-fossil fuel-based electricity to 40 per cent by 2030, he said, adding that the government is extending full support to make it happen. The encouraging sign is that India has been ranked among the top five countries for investment in renewable power projects after China, the US, Japan and the UK, he added.

- PTI
BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
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