

SUGAR

Karnataka: Farmers demand purchase of sugarcane by MPM

Sugarcane growers of the district have demanded that the State government direct the management of Mysore Paper Mills (MPM), a public sector unit in Bhadravati, to purchase their produce.

The production at MPM that has a paper factory and a sugar generation unit came to a halt in December 2014. The State government had recently denied providing fresh funds to resume production at the firm.

The sugarcane growers in Shivamogga and Bhadravati taluks, with whom MPM used to enter into a buyback agreement every year to purchase sugarcane, had expressed their ire against the decision taken by the government. In the wake of these developments, the senior officials of the office of Commissioner of Cane Development and Director of Sugar had convened a meeting with the representatives of Shivamogga district unit of Karnataka Kabbu Belegarara Sangha, an association of sugarcane growers in Bengaluru, on July 21.

Eranna, president of the district unit of the sangha, told The Hindu that the officials said the State government would issue permits to sugarcane growers to sell their produce to sugar factories in neighbouring districts. The farmers registered their opposition to the proposal in the meeting.

The farmers demanded that the government resume production at MPM at the earliest and direct the management to purchase the sugarcane. In case of delay, the government should purchase the sugarcane through MPM and sell it to other sugar factories. The farmers also demanded issuance of bills towards purchase of sugarcane in the name of MPM, Mr. Eranna said.

He said that sugarcane was cultivated in 3,700 acres in the district, of which a major chunk was under the ratooning cultivation method. The total production of sugarcane was estimated at 1.6 lakh tonne. All these years, MPM purchased sugarcane from farmers for its sugar generation unit through buyback agreement. The halting of production at MPM had created confusion among farmers. The farmers were also hesitant of entering into an agreement with private sugar factories at this juncture, Mr. Eranna said.

(Source-<http://sugarnews.in/farmers-demand-purchase-of-sugarcane-by-mpm/>, published on 25th July, 2016)

Sugarcane dues to Maharashtra farmers: Ashok Chavan's mill pays up, hearing for rest in August

Days after the sugar commissioner suspended the crushing license of sugar mills managed by former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan and 23 other mills in the state, seven of the errant mills, including the one managed by Chavan have cleared their dues to escape further

action. Final decision regarding the remaining mills is expected to be taken post a hearing in the first week of August.

Months after the end of the sugar season 2015-16, cane growers are still to get full payment of fair and remunerative price (FRP) due to them. Around Rs 500 crores is still left as cane dues with around just over 30 mills clearing 100 per cent of the payment. Sugar Commissioner Dr Vipin Sharma has started taking action against errant mills which includes suspension of license which is the penultimate step before final cancellation of licence.

Mills which have their crashing license cancelled will need to pay a hefty fine to re-instate the same failing which they will not be able to start crushing for the upcoming season.

(Source - <http://sugarnews.in/sugarcane-dues-to-maharashtra-farmers-ashok-chavans-mill-pays-up-hearing-for-rest-in-august/>, published on 24th July, 2016)

Co-gen/Power

India seeks bids for 300 megawatt of solar projects with storage

India has invited its first-ever bids for solar energy projects that include storage as a requirement as part of a trial program aimed at making the renewable resource a more reliable source of power.

Solar Energy Corp. of India, the implementing agency for clean-energy projects, sought bids for 300 megawatts of solar power to be built in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in an advertisement in a local newspaper on July 20.

SECI is seeking bids for two projects of 50 megawatt each in Andhra Pradesh with a battery energy storage system of 5 megawatt/2.5 megawatt-hour attached. In Karnataka, it has invited bids for four solar projects of 50 megawatt each with the same storage specifications.

The cost of the project will go up only marginally since the size of the storage component being sought is small, Tarun Kapoor, joint secretary at the ministry of new and renewable energy, said by phone on Friday.

(Source- <http://indianpowersector.com/2016/07/india-seeks-bids-for-300-megawatt-of-solar-projects-with-storage/>, published on 26th July, 2016)

Coal India won't revise its share buyback offer price of Rs 335 per share

Coal India (CIL) will not revise its share buyback offer price of Rs 335 per share even if the stock crosses the offered price at the bourses. This would mean the government, its majority shareholder, will earn the entire Rs 3,650 crore earmarked for the offer.

The buyback is expected to be executed in October and with the share price briefly crossing the Rs 335 threshold last Thursday, analysts are not ruling out the possibility of the stock price surpassing the buyback offer price by then.

Two weeks ago, the company's board approved a proposal to buyback 10.89 crore shares, which is 1.72% of the state-run miner's shares, for Rs 335 each at a total of Rs 3,650 crore.

"The offer price has been decided after consultation with the government and the amount of money the company can spare for the buyback. This amount or the share buyback price will not be changed even if the stock price at the bourses is higher," a senior coal ministry official said.

As per the buyback regulations, a company cannot withdraw the offer to buy back after the draft letter of the offer is filed with the Securities & Exchange Board of India (Sebi) or a public announcement is made.

(Source- <http://indianpowersector.com/2016/07/coal-india-wont-revise-its-share-buyback-offer-price-of-rs-335-per-share/>, published on 25th July, 2016)

Heavy rains taking toll on power production

Heavy rains have not only wreaked havoc on the roads of the hill state but also hampered the power production.

Gushing rivers of the Himalayan state are bringing a large amount of silt with its water, which is being deposited in the hydroelectric power plants of Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (UJVNL). The power plants are being forced to shut down for three hours daily to carry out the "flushing" exercise, affecting the power production.

The state has power demand of over 40 million units daily and has a generation capacity of 21 million units per day. After the rains, the power generation has come down to about 15 million units daily.

On July 18, the power generation had reduced to the lowest 2.93 million unit and the state discom had to purchase electricity from the central pool and other state governments to fulfil the demand.

The UJVNL managing director, SN Verma, said: "The rains are more severe than the last year and the silt deposits are much more than the previous year. The removal of the large silt deposits from the plant is a time-consuming exercise which reduces the power generation capacity."

"Flushing is required every day at the plants because of the continuous rains in the higher reaches and large amount of silt flowing into the river water. The silt has to be cleaned so that the heavy equipment and machines are not damaged," said Verma.

(Source- <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/Heavy-rains-taking-toll-on-power-production/articleshow/53368776.cms>, published on 24th July, 2016)

Chandigarh gets floating solar power plant

A floating solar power plant pilot of 10 kw peak (kWp) — the peak power — has been commissioned at Dhanas lake in Chandigarh amid efforts by the government to develop the Union Territory as a solar city.

It has been designed to supply power to fountains at the lake for aeration.

The Unique Selling Proposition is its dual-axis tracking technology that has been developed indigenously, which is capable of generating 30% or more power than conventional solar photovoltaic ones mounted on the ground.

In a move towards realising the broader objective, Yellow 2 Gen Energy Pvt, which installed the plant recently, has proposed to the Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society for innovative development of the land-neutral solar photovoltaic (floating SPV) plants.

"The approximate cost of the 10 kWp floating solar power plant designed by Yellow is around Rs 12 lakh," Jeevan Mohanty, one of the Co-founders and Director of Yellow 2 Gen Energy, said.

This technological innovation means the platform could be set up on small water bodies for meeting captive energy requirements as well as conservation of lakes and ponds.

Highlighting its relevance, Vivek Jha, a Co-founder and Director, said a decision to promote installation of floating solar power plants will benefit states that are grappling with the problem of land acquisition.

"Yellow's design has dual-axis tracking, which leads to higher energy generation and makes it cost-effective," Rakesh Chauhan, the other Co-founder and also a Director, said.

The floating power plant in the planned city is yet another attempt to achieve practical and tangible progress in harnessing solar energy and facilitate large-scale generation of electrical energy through solar radiation at economically viable cost.

The government has earlier chosen Chandigarh to develop it as a model solar city and has an ambitious plan for deployment of 175 GW renewable power capacity by 2022, including 100 GW in solar energy.

(Source- http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/chandigarh-gets-floating-solar-power-plant-116072400140_1.html, published on 25th July, 2016)

Focussing on getting stuck projects operationalised: Essar Power

Debt-laden private utility Essar Power today said its focus is on getting stuck projects operationalised and profitable.

The company is burdened with Rs 20,369 crore debt and is evaluating possibilities of reducing it.

“Our focus and priority is to get our plants operational and profitable. We have no plans now to monetize any assets for now,” a company spokesperson said.

Earlier, a company's senior executive had said that to reduce debt Essar Power was mulling monetization of some units plants, including some of its gas-based plants in the country.

Essar Power has said it is planning to fully operationalise its 1,200 mw Mahan project in Madhya Pradesh as well as its two captive gas-based plants in Gujarat.

It has two captive gas-based plants in Hariza in Gujarat with a capacity of 500 mw and 515 mw each, which are currently shut for want of fuel.

The 500-mw Bhandar plant in Hazira was commissioned in 2006 and commenced full commercial operations in 2008, but due to high fuel price, the firm shut the plant three years ago.

The 515-mw Essar Power Hazira plant had signed power purchase agreements (PPAs) with Essar Steel and Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam and was commissioned in October 1997.

“Both these plants are ready and can go operational once we have fuel supply. We are hopeful of commencing operations on the Bhandar project this quarter,” the spokesperson added.

(Source- <http://indianpowersector.com/2016/07/focussing-on-getting-stuck-projects-operationalisedessar-power/>, published on 25th July, 2016)

National lab policy for renewable energy soon

The ministry of new and renewable energy is in the process of finalising a national lab policy to set norms for testing, standardisation and certification of renewable energy related products, and define the infrastructure required for testing centres. The policy document is in the final stage of being prepared and is expected to be complete in a month's time, a government official told.

A committee headed by ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) director BS Negi and National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) director OS Sastry has already prepared a draft policy document.

Noting that there are no existing standards for products such as solar pumps, solar batteries, solar lanterns and solar thermal systems, the draft said these need to be quickly put in place. It also spelled out the highly technical standards that each of these products should adhere to. Currently, there are only three laboratories for testing solar equipment in the country — Gurgaon-based NISE and two private laboratories in Bengaluru, owned by Germany-based TUV Rhineland and US-based UL.

Ganga Charan Sharma, vice-president at TUV, and Sudhir Zautshi, head (government and industry affairs) at UL India, are members of the committee that prepared the draft policy. Other members include Vikram Kumar of IIT Delhi, Srinivasa Murthy of IISc, Bengaluru, and S Gomathinayagam, director at National Institute of Wind Energy. Apart from the absence

of standards for a number of products, there has been no direction yet from MNRE regarding testing of solar thermal systems. Standards for biogas plants were last brought out by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in 1990. These and other lacunae were brought up by a committee member and are likely to be addressed.

(Source-<http://indianpowersector.com/2016/07/national-lab-policy-for-renewable-energy-soon/>, published on 25th July, 2016)

ETHANOL

Karnataka: KSRTC unable to resume eco-friendly initiative blending ethanol with diesel

Due to restrictions in procuring ethanol and plummeting oil prices, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is unable to resume its 'eco-friendly' initiative of blending ethanol with diesel for operating its buses.

More than 50 per cent of the buses run on intra-city routes in Mysuru used to run on blended fuel till a couple of years ago. This came to an end after KSRTC started buying diesel from retail stations because of the increase in diesel price for bulk consumers, KSRTC sources told UNI.

Ethanol is produced from cane molasses, a by-product of the sugar production process. However, a public sector oil company restarted bulk diesel supply to KSRTC's fuel stations here a few months ago but the corporation is unable to restart blending ethanol with diesel due to 'technical' issues.

Besides in Mysuru, KSRTC buses were blended with ethanol in Bengaluru's city transport services as well. KSRTC started experimenting with the ethanol-diesel blend a decade ago.

When the fuel blending initiative was introduced, KSRTC was reckoned to be the country's first public urban transport corporation to make use of the ethanol-diesel blend and bio-diesel to run its buses.

Though the blending came to a halt more than a year ago, sources in KSRTC claimed it was stopped only six months ago as the old stocks of ethanol were used to blend with diesel but now fresh stocks had been procured. Sources also said that buses without high-performance engines (BS-1 and 2 series) run on blended fuel fifteen per cent ethanol with diesel.

But despite the availability of ethanol stocks, the blending was stopped as the retail fuel stations here lacked the ethanol-diesel blending arrangement while the KSRTC's depots had it. The increasing cost of ethanol, safety issues (storing is an issue without ethanol dispensers) and falling prices of diesel perhaps turned the 'green' initiative unviable.

Besides restrictions in procuring the product (with permission from the Excise Department), ethanol's susceptibility to catch fire in summer, if it is not properly stored, and the lack of dispenser units are also cited as reasons for going slow on resuming the blending process.

The buses that KSRTC has been procuring and those allotted under JNNURM comply with BS-4 norms and come with superior engines which cannot adjust with blended fuel. Such buses faced ignition problem in the past when we tried to run them on blended fuel, a source said.

Whether the initiative comes back to life now depends on the centralized purchase policy KSRTC follows.

(Source- <http://sugarnews.in/ksrtc-unable-to-resume-eco-friendly-initiative-blending-ethanol-with-diesel/>, published on 25th July, 2016)

Quote of the day

***'Seek not greatness, but seek truth and you will find both.'* -Horace Mann**