

MHPA bags prestigious Brunel Medal, sets a benchmark for future projects



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For the project's credentials of social and environmental aspects, the 720 Mega-Watt Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority run-of-river project bagged the prestigious Brunel Medal.

Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority was conferred with the Brunel medal awarded by the UK-based Institute of Civil Engineers Institution (ICE) in London on Thursday.

The Brunel medal is historically given to major projects and organisations from across the world. The 2020 edition of the prize went to the Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project - a collaboration between Indian and Bhutanese governments.

The award is proffered as a mark of excellence in civil engineering within the industry. The medal was presented to the Chairman of the Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority,

Lyonpo Loknath Sharma by the Indian Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj over a simple ceremony.

According to the media release of the UK-based Institute of Civil Engineers Institution (ICE) in London states that the project provided employment opportunities to the local community, particularly families affected by the venture, and facilitated local people to take up business activities.

Furthermore, the media release also states that the project also supported schools and health facilities by upgrading existing infrastructure, and several drinking water facilities and irrigation channels were developed by the project.

The Brunel Medal sets a benchmark for the future Hydel projects in the country. "This prestigious Brunel Medal has international relevance and by getting it for the first time, it sets benchmark for the future Hydel projects in the country," said the Economic Affairs minister, Lyonpo Loknath Sharma. Lyonpo also thanked the contrac-

tors and all the workers of the project and added that it was important to recognize all of them because it is their efforts that built the project and brought home the prestigious medal.

Lyonpo further added 'my sincere congratulations to the team of MHPA from the top management to the last person working at the tunnels. It is for their efforts, for getting dirty and getting dirty and working tirelessly to make the project a success. To get the Brunel Medal, it is worth of praise, it is worth of appreciation and it is prestigious'.

The project's credentials are lauded. "Aside from being an engineering marvel, the credentials of the project is noteworthy, and very impressive. As far as the social and environmental aspects of the project as concerned and as far as I am concerned, I think it is an outstanding and wonderful example of cooperation between our two countries, India and Bhutan, and for the road ahead. I think hydropower story looks very good," states Indian Am-

bassador, Ruchira Kamboj.

She also added that the project will reduce 2.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Bhutan and India in the past have collectively resolved to increase the hydropower energy capacity of Bhutan to 12000 MW and also that, India seeks to partner with Bhutan in renewable energy generation, solar and wind. As climate responsible developing country, India has been at the forefront of the fight against climate change.

The recognition tells that the project is taking care of the environmental and social issues. "This is also a recognition in terms of the project taking care of environmental and social issues. I think for Bhutan especially where we have done so many projects in the last three to four decades, this is probably the highest civil engineering award that we have received. It shows that we have progressed from the days of running micro hydel project to mega projects. It is good to be recognized internationally

for the work we are doing in Bhutan," states Druk Green Power Corporation's Managing Director, Dasho Chhewang Rinzin. He also added that 'it is particularly important that they have recognized the social and environment aspects that have been done through the project because they are worried throughout the world that when we do hydel projects there is negative impact on environment and the social impact on the people of the community'.

Meanwhile, the project created jobs for the community.

Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Dasho Dr Lotay Tshering and Prime Minister (India) Narendra Modi during India's PM state visit to Bhutan in 2019.

The project will produce 720MW of clean electricity for millions and provide an additional 44 per cent of electrical power generation on the hydro generation capacity of Bhutan.