

Ting Ting and related HE Projects

An aerial photograph of a river flowing through a dense, green forest. The river is white with rapids in some sections. A small, dark structure, possibly a dam or bridge, is visible in the middle of the river. The surrounding area is covered in thick vegetation.

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Background

- Sikkim – administratively divided into N, E, W, S. Sikkim, using water divides of Teesta tributaries
- Teesta & Rangit – two prominent rivers – Rangit joins Teesta at state boundary
- Hydropower potential recognised before '75
- Almost 2.88% of HE potential in India (~84,000MW) is in Sikkim

Background



Project Details

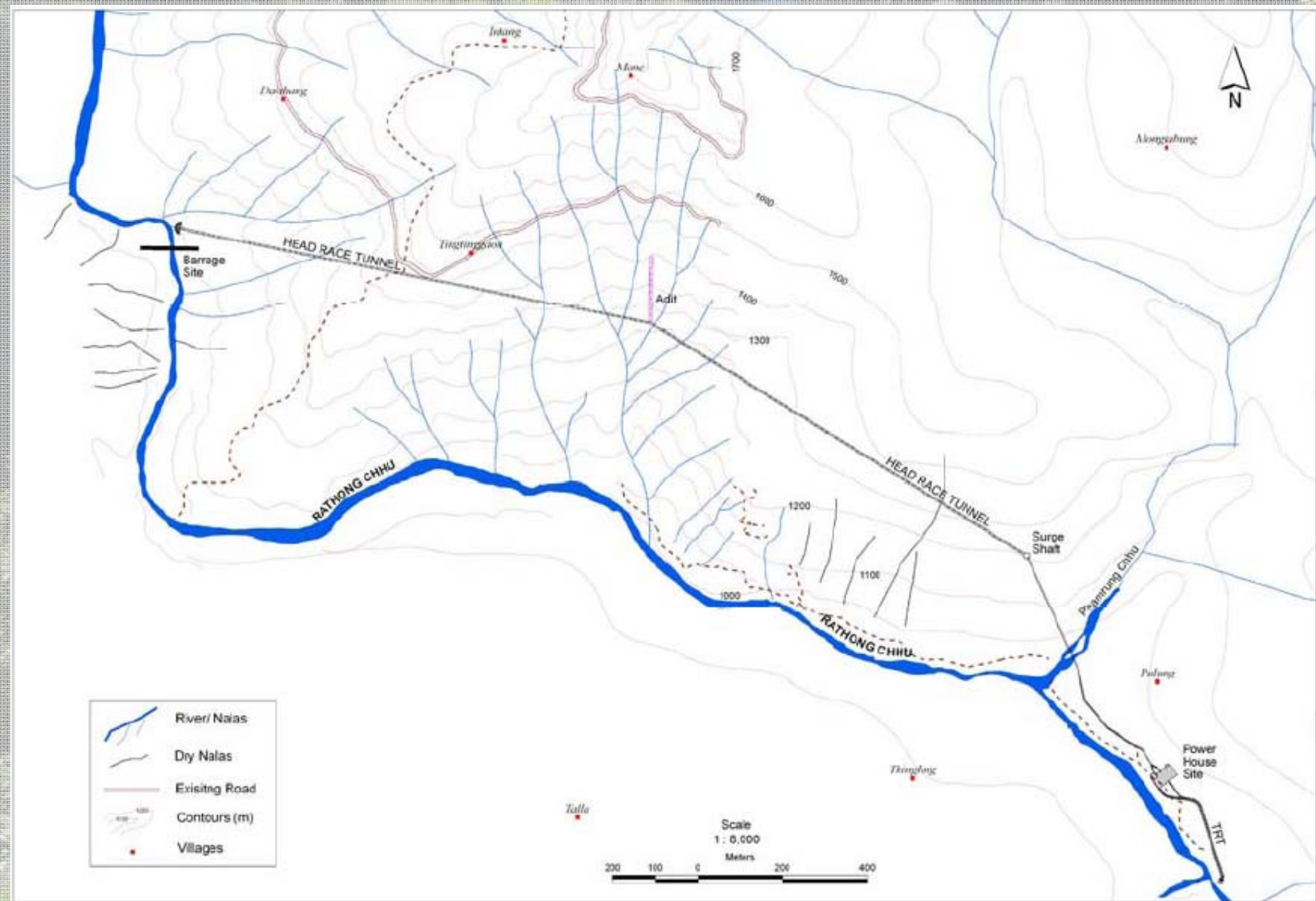
- Rangit – fed by Himalayan melting ice in the summer and monsoons in July-September
- Ideal for rafting
- Ting Ting HE Project – Rathong Chhu – a tributary of Rangit – a 99 MW project
- Taken up by TT Energy Pvt Ltd – a JV – MoU signed with Sikkim Govt in 2008 on BOOT basis

Project Details



- Roads in bad form to be reconstructed/improved for better access to dam site
- Power house – 5km downstream
- Bridges connecting both banks – road runs along north bank

Project Layout



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Study Area

- Project area or the direct impact area within 10 km radius of the main project components like dam, power house, etc. and also area within 10 km upstream of reservoir tail.
- Submergence Area
- Intermediate catchment between dam site and power house and the river stretch downstream of dam up to power house.
- Catchment area up to the dam site

Land Use



- Soil in many places: susceptible to erosion
- Air: doesnot come under “air polluting projects” category; very clean
- A Green Belt suggested to avoid erosion
- Dam break modelling also done

Land Use

- 29.4ha of land, of which 7.35ha is forest land
- 100 permt. + 250 temp. residential structures
- Rich in biodiversity – medicinal, food & fodder & religious plants
- Some vulnerable species of flora present in the catchment area
- 34 species belong to Schedule I – which includes such species as the Tiger, Red Panda



Land Use Impacts

- 5 villages to be directly affected and where land would be acquired
- Muck to be used in construction – sites identified for disposal
- 350 – 1050 workers involved
- Road construction – soil erosion, air quality affected due to traffic, etc.



Water Quality Impacts

- Sewage from construction worker camps – portable sewage treatment plants are proposed
- Turbidity levels could increase from crusher effluent
- Decomposition of submerged matter could cause increased nutrients
- Damming of river – could change the nature of the river creating a quiescent environment – positively, could create a “fish stock”

Fauna Impacts

- No migratory species or wildlife habitats in the submergence area
- Construction and blasting may disrupt wildlife movement – advised to take into account animal behaviour
- Dredging if not done carefully could disturb aquatic animals



Air Quality Impacts

- Combustion of fuel – not expected to affect much
- Construction camps to be located outside the impact zone of crushers which cause fugitive emissions



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Socio-Economic Impacts

- Workers from other parts of the country – affect local systems + carry diseases
- Availability of electricity
- Eco-tourism – due to roads developed as a result
- Marginal jobs for locals during construction phase
- No mention of religious significance of river in EIA reports

Public Perception



- Claims people welcomed the project – a few doubtful about compensation – aware of benefits and repercussions
- Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC) – believe construction would affect tourists

Earlier...

- Among 11 Projects scrapped in 2008 due to inordinate delays on the part of developers
- A major hydel project was scrapped in 1997 due to the nature of the river
- Under another list of 4 projects denied clearance

Concerns

- Yuksam considered “cradle of Sikkimese civilisation”
- Group called Concerned Citizens of Sikkim formed
- Believes construction of hydel-power projects would displace people, cause landslides and threaten tourism
- HE Projects - notorious for falling under expectations
- An earlier project proposal (Lethang) was rejected on grounds of clearing wildlife rich areas and also areas regarded sacred

Concerns

- Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) and National Sikkimese Bhutia Organisation (NASBO) – are requesting a scrap of the Ting Ting and Tashiding projects too
- Asking Jayanthi Natarajan how clearance was granted
- Claims these three are most detrimental to Sikkimese lineage and tradition – on the sacred Rathong Chu
- Also on environmental grounds – 10 kms from Khangchendzonga NP

Concerns

“Any power project over the sacred Rathong Chu river was considered a closed chapter after the Rathong Chu hydel power project was scrapped by the chief minister in 1997. Now again, for some reason, the state government has signed an agreement with a private developer to construct a 96MW project over the same river. They have deliberately kept the name of the project “Lethang” to mislead the people.”

– SIBLAC convener Tseten Tashi Bhutia.

Concerns

- Claim that under the Places of Worship Act, the river is sacred
- People unaware of project on river
- Few months back:
- MoEF unaware of both Ting Ting and Tashiding projects though public hearings were held (June 29, 2011)
- Work still going on

Concerns

- Allegations that public hearings were sponsored by companies

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FIRST WITH THE NEWS

Dzongu boycotts NHPC, public stays away from Stage-IV public hearing

PUBLIC HEARING POSTPONED 'TILL FURTHER NOTICE: NHPC ADVISED TO UNDERTAKE THOROUGH PUBLIC CONSULTATION NEXT TIME'

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

NAMPYIKDANG, 17 July: The affected people of Dzongu carried through their resolve to boycott the public hearing called for Teesta Stage-IV hydel project with complete unanimity today. When all of them, including their panchayats and MLA, remained no-shows at the venue of the public hearing, the Nampyikdang Ground, even till noon, the DC (North), SK Pradhan, who chairs the public hearing panel, postponed the public hearing till further notice since not even a single person had shown up. Says the concerned officials, and NHPC representatives.

The venue was hit by a rain-pour case of seven last night when some houses and decorations at the stage were damaged by water-logs. No public hearing was held.

people of Teesta Stage-IV developed slightly downstream from where NHPC proposes to develop the Rs. 3,504.74 crore Stage-IV. They had drafted an 11-point list of queries and clarifications (see NOV/17 issue dated 22 July 2011 for details), which was submitted to the DC earlier in the morning.

The joint representation of the panchayats and public details that they want a written reply from NHPC to all the queries before they reconsider their decision.

Announcing the postponement of the public hearing, the DC directed NHPC to carry out thorough public consultation before the public hearing whenever it is called for best so that such a boycott was not repeated.

As per the Environment Impact Assessment and Management Plan prepared for the project, a total of 14 villages/blocks will be directly affected due to the project.

ated to begin at Nampyikdang Ground in Upper Dzongu at 11 a.m. this morning, but no official business could be conducted in light of the zero turn-out of people or their representatives.

Speaking with media-persons here, the NHPC Executive Director (Siliguri), Dhanraj Patra, sought to alleviate the feeling of hurt expressed here and clear today, by insisting that if the corporation has missed out something, it will make amends.

He added that NHPC will now approach the affected people, understand their grievances in more detail and fulfil their demands. He also stated that the people should express their demands and concerns that today's boycott came to a surprise, insisting that "everything was normal till the day before".

AK Choudhary, Chief Engineer, NHPC Teesta Stage-IV, explained the project details. NHPC plans to generate 2,372 million units of

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SIBLAC takes hydel protest to Governor

A NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 July: A delegation of the Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee (SIBLAC) led by its convenor, Tseren Tashi, submitted, what the organisation introduces as an "SOS Memorandum" to the Governor's office yesterday with regard to the proposed 96 MW Ting Ting hydel project to come up on the Rathongchu in West Sikkim, informs a press release.

SIBLAC has also written to the new Minister of State, Ministry of Environment & Forests, with the same demand it may be recalled.

The memorandum expresses objections on the recent environmental clearance given to the Ting Ting project by the MoEF and demands closure of all other proposed HEPs over the Rathong Chu.

SIBLAC has called for the 'urgent intervention' of the Governor on the matter, urging the use of his "special discretionary power under Article 371 F(g) of the Indian Constitution in upholding the sanctity of our Buddhist dharmas in Sikkim".

The affected people of Teesta Stage-IV and their representatives boycott the public hearing scheduled for 22 July at Nampyikdang. The people are shown in some officials involved with conducting the hearing, taking newspaper and media persons.

Concerns

- Support – section of people in the Yuksom constituency condemned the religious slant given, and argued none protesting were personally affected
- Stated people in the area were present at the public hearing and still supported
- Govt. alleges – protests from a small few, local populations never raised protests at the public hearing

Sources

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**Wishing all voices are
heard and considered!**