

IFC increases the debt tenor from 12 to 20 years for the Super Six Wind Projects they have just financed.

* NEPRA should compare energy price of thermal power plants with the capacity and energy prices of a hydro power plant. If capacity and energy prices of hydro power plant are less than the energy price of a thermal power plant then government should think not to run thermal power plant and just pay the capacity price to the thermal power plant. Even if hydro capacity and energy prices are 20 percent higher than the energy price of a thermal power plant then just pay the capacity price to thermal power plant. Because it will even save foreign exchange big time.

* We see a lot of references of Mangla and Tarbela hydro projects and their tariff is used as a reference. Which is grossly inappropriate; because one, these two projects were constructed 40 years back, two, at that time there was no concept of NEPRA approved tariff and third they are just getting O&M price these days. In comparison, just look at the tariff and CAPEX of Neelum Jhelum Hydro power project. We need to be realistic in assessing the cost of electricity. I think investment and debt of state owned IPPs should be written off especially Neelum Jhelum Hydro as it will never be privatized so bring down the bucket tariff. Government should conduct cost benefit analysis of writing off CAPEX of big state owned IPPs with the cost of electricity. One time big hit is better than suffering every month.

* Has anyone ever thought why most of the IPPs on imported fuel (oil, RLG, coal) are in Punjab province, be it under 1994 or 2002 or 2015 power policies? There was a time when load shedding of electricity and gas was used to fail the political opponents. Political forces should sit and find a solution for this. 3600MW RLNG projects were only constructed around a city mainly to supply electricity to the central Punjab area. Due to politics, we have big thermal power plants on imported fuel. How much electricity is required in a city is often guided by the principles of politics. Protections should be provided under the Constitution of Pakistan for fair supply and distribution of electricity.

* When we last time developed a new city? Entire concentration is on big cities, entire population of Pakistan is concentrated on two third of the area. Town planning and relocation of industry will

help reducing the cost of electricity. For example, we hear that transmitting wind energy from Jhimpir wind corridor to the load center in Punjab will make wind energy financial and technically unviable. Fine, don't transmit power to Punjab, establish and relocate industry in those areas of Sindh, incentivize business community for this purposes. Build schools, colleges, and hospitals in those areas, people will automatically move to those areas.

* There is a limit to increase the tariff and there are limited ways to reduce the existing IPP tariff. Policy makers should spend more time on the revival of industry by other measures than spending more time on finding ways to reduce the returns of investors. There is a segment

in Pakistan's economy which always want concessions; be it the interest rates or export rebate or any plus minus status, the exports and profits of that sector never increases significantly therefore, putting all the blame to higher cost of electricity is not entirely fair.

In short, NEPRA Energy Week 2020 was very effective and informative. It is expected that NEPRA will make most out of this event in coming weeks and months. It was a right step in the right direction; good work NEPRA. ■

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CHEQUE DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY OF SRIC BATCH-2 HELD AT IBA KARACHI

A cheque distribution ceremony for Batch 2 of the Sindh Research Incubation Center (SRIC) was held at the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi's Center for Information and Communication Technology (IBA-CICT). The incubates of SRIC received cheques from the Government of Sindh to support their startups.

During the ceremony, the incubates of SRIC demonstrated progress of their startups in the form of presentations. SRIC is a technology incubator that facilitates the incubation process for 12 months. It is a project of the Information Science & Technology Department (IS&TD), Government of Sindh in collaboration with the IBA Karachi.

The chief guest of the ceremony was Minister, IS&TD, Nawab Muhammad Taimur Talpur while IS&TD was represented by Secretary, Muhammad Nawaz Naseem, Director General, Muhammad Yousuf and Advisor to Minister Syed Zainulabedin Shah, while IBA Karachi was represented by Director ICT & CICT IBA Karachi, Imran Batada. The ceremony was also attended by several C-level executives from the industry.

Mr. Batada in his welcome speech congratulated the startups and appreciated their progress. He said, "The SRIC Project is a great achievement for the Government of Sindh and IBA-CICT. We are trying our level best in helping these incubates progress through diploma programs



and state-of-the-art-facilities at the IBA."

On this occasion, Mr. Talpur said, "The SRIC project is part of our manifesto to promote entrepreneurship culture among the youth." He also appreciated the efforts made by IBA-CICT for running the SRIC project with utmost efficiency and providing the incubates a supportive environment where they can thrive and achieve their goals.

Mr. Yousuf in his address said, "The startups of SRIC will create job opportunities, bring new innovation in the market and contribute in the alleviation of poverty."

As per this project, IBA-CICT provides the selected startups incubation facilities for 12 months which include co-working space at the Institute, utilities, and access to investors. The objective is to ensure sustainable growth for early stage ideas related to the field of IT by providing domain specific mentorship and investment opportunities to create commercially viable technology startups from Sindh. ■