

HSR believe Pakistan is a promising country with huge potential - DR Li Xin

Exclusive interview of Chief Executive Officer, Huaneng Shandong Ruyi Energy, Pakistan

■ By Mustafa Tahir



Dr. Li Xin is CEO of Huaneng Shandong Ruyi Energy Pakistan which owns 1320 MW Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Project. He has vast experience of over 20 years in energy sector. He joined China Huaneng Group in 1998 and served in 5 power plants in 3 countries. He has worked in each role from basic level to headquarter level in IPPs. Additionally, he bears very strong educational background with having 4 professional degrees, including 1 PHD, 2 Masters Degrees and 1 bachelor degree, in the field of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Management. In an interview with Energy Update, he says that.....



EU: What is the contribution of your company in the energy sector of Pakistan?

Dr. Li Xin: Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy Pvt. Limited (HSRE) has installed two state-of-the-art units of 660MW each based on Coal-fired Super-Critical technology in Sahiwal District. This Project is one of the Phase-1 projects of China-Pak Economic Corridor, and also the milestone project depicting the important beginning of the Pakistan Government's efforts to actively develop policies and attract foreign investors to develop energy projects in Pakistan and strengthen friendship between China and Pakistan. It is the flagship project of CPEC with the first power project to become operational under Belt & Road Initiative.

On October 28, 2017, the Sahiwal Power Plant was put into commercial operation, becoming the first large-scale coal-fired power station under CPEC. The power plant has been in continuous safe production for 1,150 days, with a total generating capacity of 26 billion kWh till July 31, 2020.

EU: What are the plans of your company to do more investment in the energy sector of Pakistan?

LX: Sahiwal Power Plant is the first CPEC power project and it's one of the most important overseas power projects of China Huaneng Group, which was ranked 286 in the world's top 500 companies by Fortune Magazine. We have accomplished the feasibility studies on Thar opencast mine and a captive power plant for Special Economic Zones (SEZs), CPEC. Furthermore we are also looking into the renewable power potential in Pakistan. We believe Pakistan is a promising country with huge potential.

EU: What type of technology and system installed for power generation at the Sahiwal Coal Power Plant?

LX: Sahiwal Power Plant is Pakistan's first supercritical coal-fired power plant consisting of two 660 MW units as mentioned above. The plant operates at steam parameters above the critical point (a state beyond which there is no distinction between liquid and gaseous phases) which offers greater efficiency than older power plants based on sub-critical technology, and most importantly, very limited emissions. We hired the world's best thermodynamic team and used the most advanced tools to design this power plant. The equipment used in our power plant has been manufactured in top Chinese engineering compa-

nies like Shanghai Electric and Harbin Boiler Company. The construction quality of the project can be judged from the fact that our project was awarded the highest achievement award named as China National Quality Engineering Gold Award for the year 2018, as I mentioned above.

EU: What is your viewpoint regarding efforts being made in Pakistan for consuming indigenously produced coal in Thar for electricity production?

LX: Pakistan has huge coal reserves, more than 95% of which are in Sindh. These reserves have the potential to become a source of Pakistan's development by providing cheap and efficient energy. With the application of advanced coal-fired technology, Thar coal can even become a cleaner resource than natural gas. It is possible to integrate the use of Thar coal with the technology that we have at Sahiwal Power Plant. We believe that there are at least the following benefits of using Thar coal: reduction in demand for imported fuel which drains the foreign exchange reserves of Pakistan, development of underdeveloped areas, Increased employment opportunities generating revenue for economic development and poverty elimination.

EU: What is your own experience so far while working in the energy sector of Pakistan?

LX: I have the experience of working in five power plants in three countries around the world. Since the year 2017 I have spent a big part of my life in Pakistan. Pakistan has become my second home now. I have been working in various capacities within the company performing different roles that required a lot of travelling majorly between Sahiwal, Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi for business activities related to fuel supply, commercial operations and preliminary planning for new investments. The amount of love and warmth that I have received during my professional journey has and will always be a part of me. In a professional capacity working in the energy sector of Pakistan has been a unique experience.

EU: What are the major issues and problems in your own viewpoint of the energy sector of Pakistan and efforts of the Pakistani government to resolve them?

LX: The circular debt will not just trigger the default of incumbent power plants, but will also greatly destroy the

confidence of investors as well as banks and insurance companies. And the latter will have long-term implications on this nation. Another problem that I think indirectly affects the power sector negatively is the dubious and misleading information that circulates on print and social media about CPEC projects, especially the power projects. It is also generally believed that CPEC power plants are very lucrative and that certain companies take unfair advantage out of it. However in reality, the time at which these investments were made, the energy sector was going through a severe power shortage and the investment environment was not safe. Even though the investment opportunity was open for all, no one was up for investment in the said sector. In those crucial times, Chinese companies took the initiative and stepped in under the banner of CPEC. However, the actual returns and benefits of these investments are far less than what was promised.

EU: Do rate the electricity transmission and distribution system of Pakistan?

LX: According to me the current network of Pakistan's transmission system is coping up well with an increased generation capacity, the National Transmission and Dispatch Company is doing a good job to maintain and balance the current carrying capacity of existing lines. The ongoing construction of HVDC Matari Lahore line under the banner of CPEC is a well timely addition to the network. However in recent past distribution networks were facing some difficulties to maintain adequate voltage, to minimize line losses and power theft, I am sure distribution companies are doing well within resources to overcome such shortcomings.

EU: Do tell our readers about special efforts made by your company to safeguard the environment from the adverse impacts and effects of the Sahiwal Coal Power Plant?

LX: World's best Environment Protection Technologies have been installed to ensure that all the pollutants are removed to levels way below NEQS, World Bank and European Standards. Process Water is continuously recycled and reused after treatment. 4 types of different wastewater treatment systems are used to treat all types of wastewater to bring the parameters way below NEQS. An independent EPA-Certified Third Party monitors all types of emissions and its reports are submitted to various Government Departments every month. ■