



The long-running saga over the mammoth 11GW Belo Monte dam project in Brazil has taken another turn, with a higher court overturning a previous ruling that blocked the beginning of construction on the grounds that the project did not meet environmental standards. The project, should it proceed, would be the third largest hydroelectric dam in the world and its construction would require the resettlement of thousands of indigenous people.

Over in Nepal, Mumbai-based hydropower developer Green Ventures has said that it is looking to commission 1000MW of new capacity by 2016. The company has begun construction on a 120MW plant on the Likhu River, which will export electricity to India. It is being developed through a joint venture with the LNG Bhilwara group. Green Ventures has the rights to develop eight other sites in Nepal that together could produce 2000MW of power. According to the company's CEO, Krish R Krishnan, engineering studies are in progress with the aim of developing 600MW of capacity at two of these sites.

A spokesperson for China Three Gorges Corp, the developer behind the largest hydropower project in the world, has said that all remaining construction work is expected to be complete by 2015. The remaining work includes an underground power plant with six turbo-generators (which would take the projects total complement to 30), together with a lift for vessels on the dam's northern bank. Once fully complete, the project will be able to generate 100TWh of electricity a year.

Also in China, the Huadian power utility is looking to build 13 hydropower projects with a total capacity in excess of 21GW along the UNESCO-protected Nu River (also known as the Salween) in Yunnan Province. Construction plans were first proposed back in 2004, but hit delays due to local opposition, the efforts of environmental groups and disputes between officials over the merit of such a development.