

Indian firm forced to hand over Isimba dam

By John Odyek

Top security chiefs yesterday enforced the handover of offices, equipment, vehicles and documents by Indian firm Energy Infratech PVT Ltd (EIPL) to the Government. EIPL is the firm, which has been supervising the construction of Isimba hydro power project.

EIPL was hired by the Government to supervise the construction of the 183MW Isimba hydropower project and had been allowed a week to hand over, but they failed to do so. This time round, they were asking for four more days, but the security officials who included the Police, Uganda People's Defence Forces took over keys of the offices by EIPL.

They verified the equipment in over 10 offices and locked it up in the presence of EIPL officials. The offices were handed over to Uganda Electricity Generation Company (UEGCL) that has set up an interim team to carry on the supervision of work.

EIPL's 40-months contract was not renewed after the Government expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of their work. A handover ceremony was arranged yesterday at Isimba dam site, but VPS Chauban, the project manager EIPL did not show up.

His colleagues said he had travelled early morning to Kampala, for medical treatment. Sanjay Gupta, the deputy project manager standing in, asked for more days for the handover to take place.

"We did not know the quantum



Mutikanga, Kiggundu, Bisereko Kyomuhendo and Gupta at the hand over of Energy Infratech PVT Ltd to the electricity generation company

BETWEEN THE LINES

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of the work needed to do the handover report. We need more time to shift our families from the site. Please consider it. Regarding our payment, there was an error, we revised the formula," Gupta said.

Dr Badru Kiggundu, the chairperson of the project steering committee for Isimba and Karuma dams who

chaired the meeting, asked the firm to vacate the site and move to their Kampala offices and guest houses.

"It is puzzling, that after seven days you are not ready to hand over. Today is the final day. You have been writing letters requesting for extension of days, no more letters," he said.

Kiggundu said they will handover the things they have not handed over, such as registers, reports and documents as well as others in Kampala.

Lt. Col. Allan Kyangungu, a UPDF officer in charge of the National Vital Assets and Strategic Installations Unit, said from a security perspective, they would not

want to abuse diplomacy or anyone, but just to enforce the handover.

China International Water and Electric Corporation (CWE), is the contractor of the 183MW Isimba hydropower project. The \$567m (about sh2 trillion) is intended to increase affordable and reliable power supply for home and industrial use in Uganda.

Last week, the firm asked the Government to clear its \$900,000 (about sh3.2b) outstanding bill for work it has done as it exits. The Government assured them they would be paid. The progress of construction is estimated at 75%, with critical 12 months remaining for completion.