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Saturday, January 05, 2013 - WHILE Chairman WAPDA has said that Neelum-Jhelum hydro project is being given priority despite shortage of funds which in our view is the right step and promote Azad Kashmir economy but it is worrying to note that a huge amount of Rs 24.96 billion rupees collected as surcharge for the project and needed till June this year is not being released.

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At the same time Chairman WAPDA Raghbir Shah said that funds are not available for the Diamer Bhasha Dam and Skardu hydel projects. Bhasha dam is a mega project and perhaps being delayed as was done in the case of Kalabagh dam under the pretext of shortage of resources. According to a report, funds have been diverted from crucial development projects including the Diamer-Bhasha dam to less important schemes. Though it happens at the time of elections but this should not be done at the cost of projects like Bhasha dam which is considered as a key for the economy of the country.

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It is astonishing how the allocations made in the Budget and approved by the Parliament were being diverted to less important schemes in some areas at the cost of vital projects. Though it is the foremost duty of the government to ensure availability of allocated resources but the Special Secretary Hamayatullah Khan told the Senate standing committee that no body was ready to fund the hydel power projects of Bhasha and Skardu dams. Similar attitude in the past towards major projects led to the present energy crisis and therefore we would impress upon the Government to stop diverting funds as this would be a criminal negligence for which the country would have to pay high price.

Courtesy: ◆Pak Observer◆