

REGIONAL NEWS

Juice for the lights of India

Krishnan firm plays part in power projects

By Richard Lee
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 Enough electricity for the homes and businesses of India is the mission of one Stamford consulting firm that focuses on the power and energy industry.

Stamford-based Krishnan & Associates, led by Principal Consultant Ravi Krishnan, a native of Mumbai, India, is playing a major role in creating an electricity generation grid to meet

the country's rising industrial demands. The firm recently released a detailed study on emerging trends in the Indian power generation industry, analyzing the current state and future of

the Indian fossil fuel-fired power sector.

The Indian government has embarked on an aggressive plan to increase power generation capacity. See KRISHNAN on C2

John Evans, a manager of business development for Krishnan & Associates, left, and the principal of Krishnan Associates, Ravi Krishnan, stand in the conference room of the office in Stamford. The firm specializes in "innovative solutions for the power industry," according to Krishnan.

BOB LOCKENSTAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



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Krishnan provides juice for the lights of India

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 according to Krishnan. There is a rapidly growing need for reliable power in the vast rural areas of the country, where the public policy goal is increasing the average household income, he said.

India has four times the population of the United States but one-fifth of the power generation capacity.

"There's obviously a lot of catching up to do. For market suppliers, there is where the future is," Krishnan said, adding that during peak-demand periods there is a need for 20 percent more electrical power than currently provided.

Like other Indian businesses, Krishnan's staff at its office in Navi Mumbai have become accustomed to the periodic power shortages, making use of a battery and a stationary diesel generator.

"The government of India, through its Power Commission, has planned to increase capacity through a five-year plan. This is a great opportunity for power equipment suppliers and people who want to leverage their expertise in this market," said Krishnan, who previously

was executive vice president and chief operating officer of R&M Corp., a global provider of environmental technologies for utility and industrial boilers.

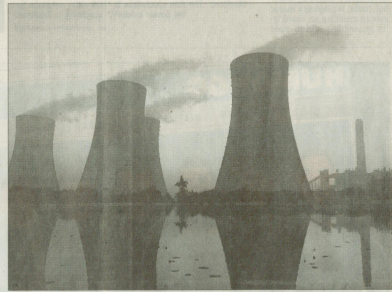
India is working to bring 200,000 megawatts online in the next 12 years, but its native coal used in the interior of the country produces high levels of ash and has a lower heating value, Krishnan said. Its generating plants have access to Indonesian coal, which burns cleaner than the Indian variety.

The Indian government is implementing stricter air pollution standards, but there is room for improvement, Krishnan said.

"We think it may not be enough. We're educating the Indian government and power developers" about building facilities that can be retrofitted with environmental controls, he said.

Besides providing consulting advice to the power and energy industry, Krishnan's firm also places personnel at Indian power plants and projects.

"We're sending Americans to India to run large power projects. This is a very



PARAJI NARAYAN/REUTERS

Cooling towers stand at the NTPC Ltd. power station in Dadri, India, earlier this month. Krishnan & Associates of Stamford is working with the Indian industry to increase power capacity and the capabilities of its personnel.

specialized skill set," he said, adding there aren't enough Indians with supervisory and vocational skills in the

country's industry. His firm has placed more than a dozen American power and energy professionals in India, Krishnan said. Many of them have Indian roots and work on two- to three-year contracts. The energy infrastructure side also is complex.

While Indian companies, often through joint ventures, manufacture components for the power and energy industry, Chinese and Western manufacturers vie for Indian power construction contracts.

"The Chinese are very active in India supplying equipment. Chinese equipment is 30 percent less expensive than Western equipment but delivered more quickly," he said. "Western

equipment has traditionally been more reliable. There are customers in India that value that, even if it is more expensive. The Chinese have been good at mass manufacturing, but when it comes to customer design they fall behind."

Krishnan founded his firm in 2005, timed to take advantage of the surge in India's economic growth. The business is among a wave of U.S.-based companies that see India's burgeoning economy as an opportunity to sell their products and services.

At the same time, Indian-based companies, fueled by an expansion in the nation's power generation capacity, are gearing up to become players in the global mar-

ketplace, said Thomas Abraham, founder of the Global Organization for People of Indian Origin, and president of Innovative Research & Products, a Stamford developer and marketer of industry research reports.

"There is a big need for power generation in India. There are a lot of opportunities for people of Indian origin because they have a network in India. There are a number of companies in Stamford that are doing business in India," said Abraham, a native of Kerala, India, adding that those contacts can result in Indian-based businesses seeking opportunities in Stamford.

As India's energy capacity improves, more companies will take advantage, empowering them to become participants in the international marketplace, said Abraham, who joined other Stamford business owners' of Indian heritage recently in a meeting with Stamford Mayor Michael Favia to discuss business connections between India and the city.

Indian companies will increasingly see opportunities in the United States, he said, as they grow within their home country.

Krishnan & Associates is filling a void as more Indians who have been living in the U.S. and expatriates travel to India to fill positions in the power and energy industry, and other key businesses, said Raj Mahale, a partner in the international corporate practice at the Stamford law office of Fox Rothschild.

"There is a huge need. I think they're serving an interesting niche model," he said. "Niche-focused advisory services are popping up all over."