



Government to hold Quality Conference with coal companies to lay down the strategy to ensure right quality coal supply to power plants

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Installed Solar Power Capacity in India crosses 10,000 MW: Shri PiyushGoyal

Union Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines, Shri PiyushGoyal, while speaking at a media event, described how India's Power sector has transformed in the last three years. The Minister noted that there is nothing in the sector to which a solution cannot be found. **"A problem is a problem till its solution is found out. The power sector needs a lot of innovation and improvement to make India power self-reliant in the future"**, he said.

Shri PiyushGoyal discussed about 3 key areas which have shown tremendous transformation in the last 3 years, including coal sector, solar power and the UDAY scheme. He said that the country has seen a huge ramp up in the **production of domestic coal in the last 3 years, to the tune of more than 100 MT**, but also noted that this year the quantity of coal produced has been less as compared to the previous 2 years. The Minister stated that though the country has the ability to produce more coal, but we are held back by market forces. This means that for several years to come India will have sufficient coal and the imports would not ramp up as it was 3 years ago, he added.

Shri Goyal said that I find myself in a piquant situation where the country has abundant coal reserves and the domestic production capacity, yet power plants in India are dependent on imported coal. This is because a major portion of our thermal power plants cannot use more than 30% of domestic coal. Shri Goyal said that we are tirelessly working in the direction to increase the ratio of domestic coal being used in our power plants by improving the technology.

The Minister pointed out that in the last decade, certain policies were being followed due to which the annual growth rate of coal production in the country would not have been more than 1-3%. Further, he noted that the power plants were so designed that, on one hand, they were imported coal dependent and on the other, were operating on sub optimal efficiency levels.

Shri Goyal said that in the evolving world energy scenario, it is quite possible that India's coal reserves remain unused in the times to come as we would be shifting towards cleaner energy technologies like solar and wind, among others. The Minister expressed his anguish on the policies followed by the previous government due to which precious foreign exchange reserve have been wasted over the years in importing coal and feeding our domestic power plants, overlooking the precious reserves that the country has.

Talking about the recent developments in the power sector, Shri Goyal expressed happiness in announcing that after 3 years of his Ministry's persuasion, the **Tamil Nadu Government has finally agreed to source domestic coal from mines in Odisha for its Cheyyur Ultra Mega Power Project (UMPP) instead of imported coal**. This would be a big step in making India self-reliant in using domestic coal for thermal power generation. Shri Goyal noted that in 2017 we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Champaran Satyagraha, which was a revolution against the Britishers for the right to self-determination and self-reliance. The supply of domestic coal to the Cheyyur plant would be a fitting tribute to the father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi as it is a step in the direction to achieve self-reliance in power generation, Shri Goyal said.

The Minister also informed that the Government is in dialogue with the coal companies to encourage focus on improvements in their power plant efficiencies by factoring in the third party sampling of coal. This would ensure quality coal to the plants. Shri Goyal said that profits of coal companies will not determine the way coal is sold

and priced in India, it will have to be a function of efficiency and good governance and the coal companies will have to earn the profits through increasing efficiency of power generation. Benefit to the end consumer has to be the ultimate goal, he said.

Shri Goyal announced that on 5th April the Ministry is holding a **Quality Conference** with all the coal companies and technical experts of the sector to sit down and the lay down the strategy to ensure that right quality of coal is supplied to our power plants and help them achieve higher efficiency rates. He also announced that the Cabinet has recently approved a more **liberalized pricing policy on Coal-bed methane** development and production, which will ensure more efficient usage of coal with evolution of technology. This will define the manner in which India uses its coal in the future, he said.

Talking about the huge strides that have been taken in the solar power sector, the Minister said that on **10th of March this year the installed solar power capacity in India has crossed 10,000 MW, four times the installed capacity 3 years back**, which in next 15 months would cross 20,000 MW. He added that India could not have completely focused on 'Making in India' in the last 3 years as being in the nascent stage, its solar power sector needed technological and financial boost from abroad to rapidly expand its horizons. Now the sector has reached certain maturity level which will lead the country becoming self-reliant in meeting its Green Energy needs. The proof is the drastic reduction in costs of solar power, becoming comparable with thermal power in India, he said. The country has shown it to the world that India is a big marketplace for manufacturing in solar power sector and international investors and manufacturers have started setting up manufacturing units in the country, he noted.

Shri Goyal also encouraged the Industry stalwarts present at the event to ramp up the silicon wafer manufacturing industry and the manufacturing of solar cells in India. He also talked about devising strategies to combine solar power with electric vehicles, which have three times the energy efficiency on engines that run on fossil fuels. This would be a revolution in the transportation sector, he added.

Talking about the success of the UDAY scheme, the Minister said under the scheme majority of state power departments and DISCOMs have become profitable in the country and this has been achieved without taking loans from the banks. This would decrease the non-performing assets of the bank, on one hand and the interest burden of the DISCOMs on the other. He quoted the example of Rajasthan which has drastically turned around from a loss making DISCOM to a profit making one in a short span of time.

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