Govt may allow FDI in nuclear power industry

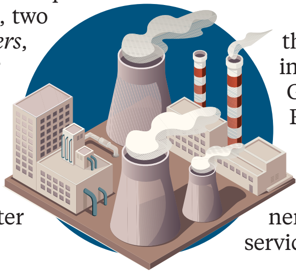
REUTERS
New Delhi, 5 May

The government is considering overturning a ban on foreign investment in its nuclear power industry and allowing greater participation by domestic private firms, two government sources told *Reuters*, as part of a push for cleaner energy.

The measures have been recommended by a government panel, set up by think-tank NITI Aayog which is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Under India's Atomic Energy Act 1962, the government plays a central role in developing and running nuclear power stations. Domestic private companies are allowed to participate as "junior equity partners" by supplying components and helping build them.

The panel has recommended changes to the act and to India's foreign investment policies so that both domestic and foreign private companies can complement nuclear power generation by public companies.



The aim is to reduce carbon emissions; nuclear is in focus because it can supply energy 24/7, said officials

The aim is to reduce carbon emissions and nuclear is in focus because it can supply energy 24/7, unlike solar energy, said the officials, who declined to be named as they were not authorised to talk to the media.

The Department of Atomic Energy has said previously that several foreign companies including Westinghouse Electric, GE-Hitachi, Electricite de France and Rosatom were interested in participating in the country's nuclear power projects as technology partners, suppliers, contractors and service providers.

India does not allow foreign investment in the nuclear power sector.

The officials said the emphasis was on private participation through small modular reactors (SMRs) to fast-track nuclear energy generation, which accounts for 3 per cent of India's total power production. Coal fires three quarters of it.

The Department of Atomic Energy, which works directly under the prime minister, and Niti Aaayog did not respond to emails and messages seeking comment.

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into India's top five personal computer companies' ranking for the first time in the fourth quarter of CY22.

Experts that *Business Standard* spoke to said that although the first quarter of CY23 may have seen the shipments slide for Apple, the firm can increase its market share from the current fifth position to fourth by the end of this year. Apple's presence in the PC (including laptops and desktops) segment in India is skewed towards MacBooks.

HDFC...

Currently, HDFC Bank is not part of any of the MSCI indices due to less investment legroom for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs). However, HDFC is part of the MSCI India index due to sufficient FPI investment legroom. The foreign shareholding in the merged entity, according to the current shareholding pattern, stood at 18.04 per cent at the end of March. This paves the way for the (merged entity) stock's entry into the MSCI index. "With the foreign room at 18 per cent as of end-March, the LIF will only increase to 100 per cent once foreign room crosses 25 per cent. That could be some time away. We expect passive MSCI selling of around 13 million shares of HDFC Bank at the time of merger completion," said analysts Brian Freitas of Periscope Analytics, who publishes on Smartkarma. In the run-up to the merger between HDFC Bank and HDFC, the Street was keenly tracking the FPI shareholding pattern and MSCI announcements, given its large implications from the ETF flow point of view. Suresh Ganapathy, head of financial services research at Macquarie Capital, said with MSCI making a formal announcement, the focus would now shift to the fundamentals of the financial behemoths.

Nuclear...

Factory-built and ready-to-shift, each SMR produces up to 300 megawatts (MW) and requires less capital, time and land than conventional reactors. They can also safely be deployed in populated areas, the officials said.

State-run Nuclear Power Corp of India (NPCIL) and Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam are the only two nuclear power generators in India. Thermal power company NTPC and oil marketing firm Indian Oil Corp, both government-controlled, have formed partnerships with NPCIL for nuclear power.

Rlys...

The All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) has opposed the order and has written to the Railway Board to withdraw it immediately. "Unfortunately, the issue of redeployment of the staff or their retaining has never been discussed with the Organized Labour, which is a deviation from the prevalent practice regarding closure of the Railway Establishments," the federation alleged in its letter sent on Friday.

The number of employees likely to be affected by the move is 887.

According to estimates of the AIRF (2020), as for paper tickets, about 200 million are required for reserved seats, as also more than 3,000 million for unreserved ones every year. In the UTS, the union has calculated digital tickets to be only 2 per cent of the total.

"So far as the experience of outsourced private printers is concerned, the example of Western Railway can be quoted; where work on printing tickets was assigned to Axis Media, Mumbai, which summarily failed and defaulted in timely printing and supply," Shiva Gopal Mishra, general secretary of the federation, had told Railway Board in his letter in 2020. Western Railway was compelled to request other railway zones on the matter, Mishra had said in the letter.

The disagreements then resulted in halting the closure.

The cost of printing in the railway presses works out to 11 paise per ticket, which is below the market price, the union said. However, the official quoted above said outsourcing would prove to be cheaper for the national transporter. The ministry has ordered the staff of these printing presses will be re-deployed. However, the federation has issues with this. "The manpower available in these presses, who have long experience of printing, shall also be rendered surplus, resulting in various problems of their proper redeployment for gainful utilisation," it said.

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