

Coal to stay important: Energy majors at Just Transition meet

Its share in power generation will fall but not at the cost of economic development: Power secy

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The third meeting of the Energy Transition Working Group under India's G20 Presidency on Monday saw deliberations on Just Transition (JT), led by the ministries of coal and power, to decide on the country's pathway for sustainable energy transition. Sector leaders —national miner Coal India (CIL) and country's largest power generator NTPC — opined that as the country's economic needs take precedence, coal consumption cannot be reduced overnight.

Highlighting that India is already close to its emission reduction target, seven years in advance, Alok Kumar, secretary, Ministry of Power, said accelerating energy transition shall boost energy security. "We will reduce dependence on oil & petroleum products in the long term. In the coming years, renewables will be much cheaper to use while the cost of fossil fuel will go up. If we have the right mix and move in a calibrated manner, it will be affordable for the masses, reduce our fossil fuel imports, and bring energy security," Kumar said.

He, however, noted that coal would remain important in the coming one



or two decades for India's energy basket. "It is our own resource and provides firm power, and is even required to support growth of RE (renewable energy). India will depend on coal until the cost of energy storage comes down. The share of coal in our power generation mix will continuously decline but not at the cost of economic development. Our emissions may grow but so will our energy transition efforts," the power secretary said.

At CIL, challenges would be "the most extreme", said its Chairman and MD Pramod Agrawal. Mine closure, he said, is one of the effective tools in energy transition but implications of it on coal-producing states would be

Application fee cut for solar equipment makers by 80%, enlisting period doubled

Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has taken major reforms in the 'Approved List of Models and Manufactures for Solar Photovoltaic Modules' (ALMM) including a sharp 80 per cent reduction in application fee as well as doubling enlisting validity, a ministry statement said. The major reforms include the reduction in application fee by 80 per cent; a substantial reduction in inspection fee, with a reduction in certain cases being as high as 70 per cent and an exemption from factory inspection in case of enlistment of additional models in ALMM which are similar to those already enlisted by the applicant, but having lower wattage.

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significant, especially in the east. "CIL, on its part, can initiate physical closure of mines. The difficult part is taking care of the population which is socio-economically directly or indirectly dependent on mines and related activities. Money is not the problem, finding the right policy will be," Agrawal said.

Invoking India's energy needs, Gurdeep Singh, chairman and managing director, NTPC, said: "Our energy needs are increasing at the rate that today we cannot say we can downsize coal consumption. We can do it tomorrow but we will need to have a viable sustainable model," he added.

He further said renewables will be replacing coal in the coming years in the energy supply basket. "Millions of people are directly or indirectly depend-

ent on coal and we need to find livelihood for them when a coal mine or thermal power plant is closed. There needs to be a social security net for the workers engaged in the sector," Singh added.

Amrit Lal Meena, secretary, Ministry of Coal, who steered the panel discussion said, there is a need for comprehensive strategies, collaborative partnerships, and robust policy frameworks to facilitate Just Transition.

"On the supply side, the coal sector provides revenue to several states, contributes ₹400 per tonne to GST compensation and is the biggest contributor to rail freight. The government is committed to striking a delicate balance between energy security, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development," Meena added.

