

Solar panel makers pitch for ALMM order as cheap imports surge

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Notwithstanding the government's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat plank, the domestic solar panel manufacturers are bleeding due to the reckless cheap imports from China in the last one year after the Approved List for Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) order was put on hold.

Despite a Customs duty of 40 per cent, India has imported 18 GW of solar panels till January FY24 against the actual physical progress has only been 7.5 GW, according to industry sources.

SOLAR POLICY SHIFT

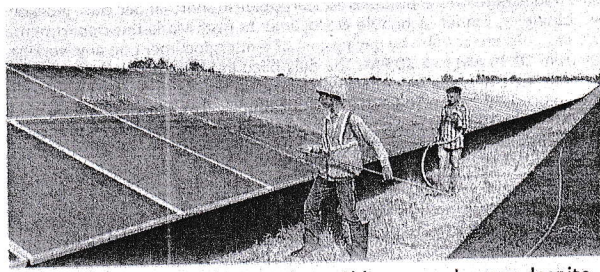
Last March, the Ministry of

New and Renewable Energy suspended the roll-out of the ALMM of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (requirements for compulsory registration) Order, 2019 for FY'24 to ease the shortage of domestic solar panel supply. Amid the user industry plea for an extension, the Ministry will review the ALMM order suspension before April 1.

The Ministry already indicated that the existing government approved solar projects will be excluded from the ALMM order.

Imports from China were cheap despite a 40 per cent import duty as China was giving special incentives to push exports to India, said the CEO of a solar panel company.

The products which were



DRAGON'S PUSH. Imports from China were cheaper despite a 40 per cent import duty as China was giving special incentives to push exports to India REUTERS

imported from China were without any guarantee and even if two or three panels stopped working it would lead to huge cost escalation, he added.

CHALLENGES

The capacity utilisation level of domestic solar manufac-

turers has already dipped to 30-35 per cent due to dumping by China. In fact, the domestic solar panel producers survived mostly by tapping the export market and shipped out 2.87 GW of modules to the US alone in last three quarters of this fiscal, he added. As per the

2019 order, ALMM and BIS Certification Type 2 approval was required for solar modules used in India. However, with the order put on hold many companies sprung up just to import modules from countries such as China and Vietnam without any quality control, he said.

India has a solar module production capacity to produce over 40 GW annually and of this 20 GW of capacity is waiting for formal ALMM approval.

India plans to install about 280 GW of solar power by 2030 even as domestic solar module manufacturers are facing a stiff challenge from uncertified or under-certified imports of the same, primarily from China.

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