

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1295
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.12.2021

Closure of Ash Ponds

1295: MS. S. JOTHIMANI

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is an SOP on how coal-based power plants will be decommissioned to ensure safe management, handling and disposal of hazardous substances;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether there is an SOP for the closure of ash ponds as part of decommissioning coal-based power plant;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the details of measures being implemented to improve the efficiency of energy transition in the power sector?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (d) Draft 'Environmental guidelines for decommissioning Coal / Lignite-Fired Power Plant' for environmentally sound handling and disposal of various categories of wastes generated after decommissioning of a Power Plant has been prepared by a Joint Committee comprising of members from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, CPCB and Central Electricity Authority (CEA)

The draft guideline also addresses the closure of ash ponds and ash impoundments under the chapter on Ash Management.

Further, the MoEF&CC has formulated Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Trans boundary Movement) Rules, 2016 for handling of Hazardous substances which are equally applicable on the decommissioning of a Power Plant in an eco-friendly manner.

(e) As a major step towards energy transition, the Government has taken various steps for promotion of RE capacity addition and to optimize the cost of Energy supplied to the beneficiaries/customers. Some of these steps are as follows:

- i. Government has notified Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) targets which are to be complied with by obligated entities.
- ii. Waiver of Inter-State Transmission Charges on Transmission of the Electricity generated from Solar and Wind Sources of Energy.
- iii. Green Term Ahead Market (GTAM) - Green Term Ahead Market contracts will allow additional avenues to the RE generators for sale of renewable energy; enable Obligated entities to procure renewable power at competitive prices to meet their Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO); and provide a platform to environmentally conscious open access consumers and utilities to buy green power.
- iv. Green Day Ahead Market (GDAM) - GDAM launched in October, 2021 facilitates a marketplace for trading of RE Power on a day-ahead basis for accomplishment of green targets as well as support integration of green energy in a most efficient, competitive and transparent manner.
- v. Ministry of Power vide notification dated 15th November, 2021 has notified revised scheme for Flexibility in Generation and Scheduling of Thermal/Hydro Power Stations through bundling with Renewable Energy and Storage Power.
- vi. Establishment and strengthening of transmission system (including establishment of Renewable Energy Management Centers- REMCs) under Green Energy Corridor (GEC) scheme, facilitates the evacuation of power from renewable rich States.
- vii. Launching of National Hydrogen Mission (NHM) aims to cut down carbon emissions and increase the use of renewable sources of energy.
- viii. Apart from the above, the Government has brought out various policy/regulatory framework and financial assistance [in the form of subsidy, viability gap funding (VGF)] to the developer(s) as well as for individual(s) (like rooftop solar scheme, solar Pump, KUSUM scheme etc.) for establishment of Renewable Energy (RE) Plants.

As a result of all these efforts of the Government:

- i. The cumulative renewable power installed capacity (excluding hydro above 25 MW) has increased by 3 times from 35 GW in March 2014 to 103.06 GW as on October, 2021 and constitutes over 26.4 per cent of the country's installed power capacity. With the inclusion of large hydro-electric power plants, the total installed capacity would be 149.6 GW and the share of renewable energy in installed capacity would be around 38.3 per cent.
- ii. India is implementing one of the largest renewable energy expansion programmes with a target of achieving 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022 and later up to 450 GW.
- iii. Installed capacity of solar energy in India has increased by more than 18 times from 2.63 GW in March 2014 to 47.7 GW in October, 2021.
- iv. As on 31st October, 2021, installed capacity of wind energy is 40 GW.

- v. Generation from renewable energy sources has increased three times between 2014-15 and October, 2021 while the generation (including renewable sources) has increased by 24 per cent between 2014-15 to 2020-21. This has been actively promoted by the “must-run” status of renewable energy generation.
- vi. As against the target of achieving 40% contribution of energy through non-fossil fuel based energy sources by 2030, the country has already achieved around 40 % contribution of energy through non-fossil fuel based energy sources in 2021 itself, which reflects the commitment of the Central Government towards energy transition.
