MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉCONOMIE, DES FINANCES ET DE LA RELANCE
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ENERGIE ET DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

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G En bref

Infrastructure :

- Le gouvernement donne son accord pour un projet de ferry sur la rivière Dharma en Odisha, réduisant la traversée de 6 heures par la route à 1 heure par voie navigable
- La National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) annonce un objectif ambitieux de construction de 4 600 km d'autoroute pour l'année fiscale 2021-2022

Ferroviaire :

- Alstom livre la 100ème locomotive électrique produite dans son usine du Bihar
- Pour lutter contre la propagation de la Covid-19, les Indians Railways annoncent avoir déployé 300 wagons dédiés à l'isolement des malades

Développement et transports urbains :

- La Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI) engage une deuxième tranche de 150 M EUR pour le financement du métro à Pune
- Le programme de logement de l'Andhra Pradesh prévoit la construction de 3 000 000 logements basse consommation

Pétrole, gaz et biocarburants :

- A la suite de cinq augmentations successives en une semaine, les prix de l'essence et du diesel atteignent des niveaux records
- La Banque Asiatique de Développement annonce mettre fin au financement de projets d'extraction de charbon, de pétrole et de gaz naturel

Electricité et énergies renouvelables :

- Le Gujarat est resté l'Etat le plus dynamique dans le domaine éolien en 2020-2021, avec la mise en service de 1 020 MW de capacités de production supplémentaires
- Le Conseil des ministres approuve le programme Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) dédié aux batteries et au stockage d'énergie, pour un montant de 2 Mds EUR
- Le ministère des énergies nouvelles et renouvelables publie les lignes directrices du programme PLI dédié à la production de modules photovoltaïques à haut rendement
- Le programme PLI dédié au solaire devrait contribuer à satisfaire 8 à 13% de l'accroissement de la demande de panneaux photovoltaiques indienne d'ici à 2030
- Le ministère de l'électricité enjoint 18 Etats indiens à publier avant le 31 mai les arrêtés tarifaires d'électricité pour l'exercice 2021-2022
- L'augmentation de la consommation électrique de 25% lors de la première semaine de mai témoigne de la reprise de la demande industrielle et commerciale d'électricité
- La Cour Suprême demande l'enfouissement des lignes électriques dans les zones d'habitat d'un oiseau menacé d'extinction, menaçant les projets solaires dans le Rajasthan et le Gujarat
- Au vu des retards entrainés par la crise sanitaire, le MNRE accorde aux développeurs un délai supplémentaire pour la mise en service de projets d'énergie renouvelable

Mobilités électriques :

- Deux starts-up de la mobilité, Welectric et MoEVing, s'associent pour développer la location de scooters électriques à destination des livreurs de colis

Environnement et qualité de l'air :

- Un rapport du cabinet de conseil Verisk Maplecroft révèle que l'Inde compte 43 des 100 villes les plus exposées aux risques environnementaux dans le monde

Revue de presse

1. Infrastructure

Govt clears Rs 110 crore jetty project on Dhamra river in Odisha

The Economic Times, 29/04/2021

A Rs 110-crore jetty project, connecting Kaninali in Bhadrak district and Talachua in Kendrapara district of Odisha, will come up on the Dhamra river, cutting travelling time for passengers from 6 hours by road to 1 hour by waterway, the Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) Ministry said on Friday.

The ministry further said that the ROPAX (roll-on/roll-o passenger) jetty project will facilitate indirect employment opportunities to locals around the Dhamra river and reduce road distance of 200 km from Talachua to Dhamra.

"Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) has accorded administrative approval for sanction of Rs 50.30 crore for developing allweather ROPAX (Roll-on/Roll-o Passenger)Jetty and allied infrastructure connecting Kaninali in Bhadrak district and Talachua in Kendrapara district, Odisha under the Sagarmala initiative.

"The government of Odisha will fund another 50 per cent cost of the project.," it said.

According to the ministry, the total capital cost of the project is Rs 110.60 crore which includes construction of RO-PAX Jetty at Kaninali and Talachua, utility infrastructures such as parking area development, navigational aids and dredging.

Kaninali in Bhadrak district and Talachua in Kendrapada district, are located on the northern and southern banks of River Dhamra respectively. The people of Talachua and nearby villages largely depend upon Dhamra port for their livelihood, which is approximately 4 km from Kaninali Ghat.

The ministry pointed out that since there is no connectivity through road, the local population depends upon passenger ferries at ghats of Kaninali and Talachua to cross the river (a stretch of 7 km).

Noting that currently the number of passenger vehicles move through private boats without safety and passengers face diiculty in embarking and disembarking from launches on an everyday basis, the ministry said, "this project will enhance the safety of passengers and vehicles with state-of-the-art utility infrastructure.

" The connectivity will increase the commercial and business activities and uplift the socio-economic status of the surrounding region,it added.

Highway construction: NHAI sets ambitious target of 4,600 km for FY22

Financial Express, 12/05/2021

Despite the pandemic still ravaging the nation and its economy, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has set an ambitious target to build new highways with a combined length of 4,600 km in the current fiscal year. Last fiscal, NHAI constructed a record 4,192 km of highways, up from 3,979 km developed in 2019-20 and 3,380 km in 2018-19.

Though the target for the current year appears to be a tall order, the NHAI believes that it could meet it with reliance on EPC projects and HAM projects. The authority has a robust stream of funds including budgetary outlays, borrowings, and the funds being realised through the toll-operate-transfer (TOT) route.

NHAI Chairman S S Sandhu said the authority was confident in achieving the target set for the current fiscal even as there has been some impact on highway construction lately owing to a pandemic-induced labour shortage in some sites. "Awards this year will be much more than construction target, but that is being finalised," Sandhu told FE.

NHAI awarded 141 projects for a length of 4,788 km in 2020-21. The length awarded in 2020-21 was the highest in the last three years, compared to 3,211 km in 2019-20 and 2,222 km in 2018-19.

Of the total projects awarded in 2020-21, two were on Build-Operate-Transfer (Toll) for a length of 132 km, 69 projects for a length of 2,609 km were on Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) and the balance 70 projects for a length of 2,047 km are on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) model.

The capital cost of the projects awarded in 2020-21 amounts to Rs 1,71,226 crore. The capital cost of the projects awarded in 2019-20 and 2018-19 was Rs 81,324 crore and Rs 64,009 crore respectively. NHAI had earlier said that it hopes to award projects worth around Rs 2.25 lakh crore in the current fiscal.

Asked whether lockdown and restrictions on mobility were impacting highway construction, Sandhu said, "There is some impact, not much. The impact varies from place to place. At some places, there is no impact; but at other places, 10-15% of the workers have gone back. Overall, as of now, the impact is minimal or marginal."

All executing agencies including the NHAI constructed a record of 13,298 km highways in 2020-21, up from 10,237 km in 2019-20. Minister for road transport and highways hope that construction would touch 40 km/day in 2021-22 from 36.4 km a day in 2020-21.

2. Ferroviaire

French firm Alstom delivers 100th electric locomotive to Indian Railways

Energy World, 01/05/2021

New Delhi: Alstom has successfully manufactured and delivered the 100th electric locomotive to the Indian Railways, the French multinational rolling stock manufacturer said on Friday. Built in one of the country's largest integrated greenfield manufacturing facilities, these are the most powerful made-inIndia electric locomotives.

As part of the largest foreign direct investment (FDI) project of the railways, the Ministry of Railways and Alstom signed a contract worth 350 crore euros (Rs 25,000 crore) in 2015 and created a joint venture.

The contract allowed for the manufacture of 800 double-section, 12,000- horsepower electric locomotives for freight service and associated maintenance for a period of 11 years. The scope also included the setting up of a manufacturing plant in Bihar's Madhepura for building the e-locos and two maintenance depots in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur and Maharashtra's Nagpur.

The project is touted to create more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in the country, primarily in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Deployed for operations on the major freight routes, including the dedicated freight corridors, the Prima T8 WAG-12B e-locos have already clocked close to 50 lakh kilometres, hauling a wide range of commodities.

Some of the key commodities moved by these e-locos include coal, cement, foodgrains, fertilisers, petrochemical products, minerals, and posts or parcels across 17 states and two Union territories. ASG RC

Indian Railways' covid care isolation coaches are now functional in 17 diverse locations across seven states

Financial Express, 10/05/2021

In the relentless fight against the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Indian Railways through timely and coordinated action continues its momentum to reach out to state health authorities and administrations. As per states' demand, the national transporter has moved covid care isolation coaches to diverse parts of India. The covid care isolation coaches are now deployed at 17 railway stations in seven states of the country and catering to Covid positive patients. According to the Railway Ministry, a total of 298 coaches have been handed over to various states for covid care of patients with a bed capacity of more than 4,700 beds. Below are the details on the deployment of covid care coaches to the seven states:

- Indian Railways have deployed a total of 60 coaches in Maharashtra. The health facility has witnessed a steady registration of Covid positive patients at Nandrubar and subsequent discharge through due medical certification after the period of isolation. Cumulatively, the state health Authorities have registered 116 admissions and discharged 93 patients up to now. The facility is now being used by 23 patients. At Ajni Inland Container Depot, the national transporter has positioned 11 such coaches and handed over to Nagpur Municipal Corporation. At this facility, nine patients were admitted. Now all are discharged post-isolation. The facility at Palghar is now functional, where Indian Railways provided 24 coaches.
- In the State of Madhya Pradesh, 42 coaches have been deployed. The Ratlam Division has deployed as many as 22 coaches with 320 beds at Tihi railway station near Indore. So far, 21 patients have been admitted to this facility while seven patients were discharged. 20 coaches have been positioned at Bhopal, where 29 admissions and 11 patients have been discharged as per the latest data. Now 18 covid patients are utilizing this facility while 302 beds are still available at this facility.
- Indian Railways, as per Assam's demand, has moved 21 isolation coaches to Guwahati as well as 20 covid care isolation coaches to Badarpur near Silchar. A few days ago, covid care isolation coaches were deployed by the national transporter at Sabarmati, Chandlodiya and Dimapur respectively.
- In Delhi, 75 covid care isolation coaches with a capacity of 1200 beds have been deployed by Indian Railways as per the state government's demand. As many as 50 coaches are placed at Shakurbasti station and 25 isolation coaches at Anand Vihar railway station. So far, five admissions were registered with all discharged. Now, a total of 1200 beds are available.
- In Uttar Pradesh, 10 isolation coaches each are placed by Indian Railways at Bareli, Faizabad, Bhadohi, Nazibabad and Varanasi, totalling to a capacity of 800 covid care beds in 50 coaches. The national transporter has made available a fleet of over 4,400 such coaches with around 70,000 covid care beds to serve as isolation units, according to the Railway Ministry.

3. Développement et transports urbains

EIB commits second tranche of 150 million euros for Pune Metro Rail project

The Economic Times, 07/05/2021

European Investment Bank (EIB) on Friday committed second tranche of 150 million euros (about Rs 1,335 crore) for Pune Metro Rail project. The agreement to this effect was signed by K Rajaraman, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Aairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government ofIndia (GoI) and Christian Kettel Thomsen Vice President, EIB, the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

EIB had approved total loan of 600 million euros to fund the Pune Metro Rail project, it said, adding, the finance contract for the first tranche of 200 million euros was signed between GoI and EIB on July 22, 2019.

The project aims to provide efficient, safe, economic and pollution-free Mass Rapid Transit System in densely populated area in the city of Pune served with heterogeneous traffic options, it said.

"The financing from EIB will help to fund construction and operation of Corridor 1 (North-South) - Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) to Swargate and Corridor 2 (West-East) -Vanaz (Kothrud) to Ramvadi, totaling about 31.25 km and related purchase of a related fleet of metro cars," it said.

The Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MAHAMETRO) is the implementing agency for this project.

AP housing scheme to use energy-saver tech

Energy World, 10/05/2021

Visakhapatnam: The innovative 'Indo-Swiss energy efficient building technology' would be used in Andhra Pradesh's housing scheme - Pedalandariki Illu (housing for all the poor).

Under the initiative, 30 lakh affordable houses would constructed in the state. According to state officials, the Indo-Swiss EE technology would reduce the temperature by about two degrees inside houses and save about 20 per cent electricity.

Under the 'Building Energy Efficiency Project', the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) through Indo-Swiss BEEP will provide training to engineers and employees of ward and village secretariats and the housing department. This would help in effective implementation of Energy Conservation Building Code-Residential (ECBC-R) in this affordable housing programme.

Initially, 50 engineers will be trained as master trainers who can impart the training by themselves to other engineers.

Housing department special chief secretary, Ajay Jain, participated in a recent webinar conducted by Indo Swiss Building Energy Efficiency project (BEEP), India. Jain explained the government's overall strategy in implementing this ambitious project.

"The rate of heat transfer to the roof could be reduced by using roof insulation or reflective paint on the rooftop. The autoclave aerated concrete blocks, cavity wall, hollow bricks, etc. will reduce the net heat gain over building envelope. Using proper window shading like blinds or rolls kept outside the windows will also lower net heat gain," said Jain.

"The first phase construction would cover about 15 lakh housing units. The government has decided to incorporate energy efficient and thermally comfortable designs in the houses. Energy efficient design strategies would be applied in this housing project, thus complying with the Eco-Niwas Samhita 2018 (ECBCResidential) code under BEEP. The ECBE-R will ensure adequate natural ventilation, reduced electricity consumption by a minimum 20 per cent, improve thermal comfort (cooling), day lighting and provide safe and healthier environment in buildings," said Jain.

4. Pétrole, gaz et biocarburants

Petrol, diesel prices at record highs; Petrol crosses Rs 100-mark in Maharashtra

The Economic Times, 10/05/2021

Petrol and diesel prices on Monday hit record highs across the country after rates were increased for the fth time in a week, following which Maharashtra joined Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in the league of states where petrol rates breached the Rs 100- a-litre mark.

Petrol price was hiked by 26 paise a litre and diesel by 33 paise per litre, according to a price notification by state owned fuel retailers.

This was the fth increase in prices since May 4, when the state-owned oil rms ended an 18-hiatus in rate revision during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

The increase took petrol and diesel prices to their highest-ever level. In Delhi, petrol now comes for Rs 91.53 per litre and diesel is priced at Rs 82.06 per litre.

While petrol prices had crossed the Rs 100-mark in some places in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh a few days back, Maharashtra's Parbhani joined the league on Monday. Petrol in Parbhani was priced at Rs 100.20 a litre, while in Bhopal it came for Rs 99.55 a litre.

The fuel is sold at Rs 102.42 a litre in Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan and at Rs 102.12 in Anuppur of Madhya Pradesh.

This is the second time this year that rates in some parts have crossed the Rs 100-a litre mark. Rates had breached the physiological mark for the first time in mid-February.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added ta (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh.

In five increases in the last one week, petrol price has risen by Rs 1.14 per litre and diesel by Rs 1.33 - more than neutralising all of the reduction that came between March 24 and April 15.

After raising petrol price by a record Rs 21.58 per litre and diesel by Rs 19.18 since the government raised excise duty to an all-time high in March last year, state-owned fuel retailers, IOC, BPCL and HPCL had reduced petrol price by 67 paise a litre and diesel by 74 paise per litre effected between March 24 and April 15.

Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal.

No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trends in international oil markets.

They said prices have been on a continuous uptrend since April 27, crude oil price is hovering near USD 70-per-barrel mark.

Central and state taxes make up for 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel. The union government levies Rs 32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and Rs 31.80 on diesel.

In Mumbai, the petrol price was hiked to Rs 97.86 a litre on Monday from Rs 97.61, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 89.17 from Rs 88.82, the price notification showed.

Asian Development Bank to end coal, oil and gas financing - draft statement

Energy World, 07/05/2021

SINGAPORE : The Asian Development Bank will no longer finance coal mining or oil and natural gas activities, it announced in a draft policy statement on Friday, a move welcomed by environmental groups, which said it was a decade overdue.

The multilateral development bank, which focuses on eradicating poverty in Asia, provided no timeline for its commitment. It also laid out

conditions under which fossil fuel projects would continue to receive funding, such as where no other cost-effective technology was available.

Yongping Zhai, head of the ADB's energy sector, said the draft would be deliberated by its board of directors in October. Green groups had earlier this week urged the ADB to end loans to the entire fossil fuels sector.

"The draft coal ban policy is a decade late, but it still helps build the economic case for the energy transition to governments and investors, and will help avoid more stranded coal assets," said Pedro H. Maniego Jr., senior policy adviser at the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities.

"(...)If the Bank will consider fossil gas as a bridge and transition fuel, it needs to stipulate an end," he added.

Set up in the early 1960s and headquartered in Manila, the ADB has since channelled $42.5 billion into the energy sector across the region, it said on its website.

5. Electricité et énergies renouvelables

Gujarat again tops new wind power capacity

The Times of India, 12/05/2021

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat continues to be the preferred destination for setting up wind power projects in India. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Gujarat witnessed the highest addition of wind power generation capacity in the country in 2020-21.

Wind power projects with the cumulative generation capacity of 1,020.3MW were installed and commissioned in Gujarat from April 2020 to March 21. That was the highest capacity addition by any state in India during the period, shows data compiled by Indian Wind Turbine Manufacturers Association (IWTMA).

Gujarat was followed by Tamil Nadu (303.7MW) and Karnataka (148MW). In fact, Gujarat grabbed the lion's share of 68% in the new wind power capacity addition across the country in 2020-21. About 1,503.3MW of new wind power generation capacity was installed in India in fiscal 2021, IWTMA data shows.

With these new installations, Gujarat's current operational capacity for generation of power from wind energy sources stands at 8,561.8MW as against 7541.5MW in 2019-20. At 1,468.4MW, Gujarat created the highest wind power capacity in the previous fiscal as well.

"The majority of the projects — with the capacity of 700MW — that came up in Gujarat during the last financial year were projects auctioned by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) before the outbreak of the pandemic," said a market player, who wished to remain anonymous. "About 200MW capacity was added via tenders floated by state-run power utilities."

Renewable energy companies such as Adani Green and ReNew Power were among the prominent players that commissioned their power projects. Adani Green and ReNew Power commissioned 100MW and 300MW wind power projects in Kutch in March 2021.

The state government sources, however, pegged the capacity of new wind projects commissioned in Gujarat at 890MW for the fiscal 2021.

Gujarat currently stands second after Tamil Nadu in terms of the total installed wind power generation capacity in the country.

Cabinet approves production-linked incentives for battery storage

Energy World, 13/05/2021

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet has approved the production-linked incentives for advanced chemistry cell or battery storage, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar informed on Wednesday.

"To make the country Aatmanirbhar, the cabinet has approved a production-linked incentive for advanced chemistry cell or battery storage in the cabinet meeting which took place today," Javadekar told reporters here.

"Currently, we import battery storage equipment worth Rs 20,000 crores. The approval of the production-linked incentives will not only reduce the import dependency but also give a big push to the electrical mobility," he said.

The Union Minister further said that battery storage can be a substitute for diesel generators.

"The cabinet has approved Rs 18,100 crore for production-linked incentives. An investment of Rs 45,000 crore is expected from the national program on advanced Chemical Cell Battery Storage," Javadekar said.

He further said that India has an ample amount of copper and bauxite, which are the raw materials for battery storage. "This will reduce the import of the fuel in coming years," he added.

MNRE announces guidelines for production-linked incentive scheme

Energy World, 29/04/2021

New Delhi: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) on Thursday released guidelines for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme to promote manufacturing of high efficiency solar PV modules in India.

For this, the Cabinet on 11 November, 2020, had approved and allocated an amount of Rs 4,500 crore to be spent over a period of five years.

According to the official guidelines, the PLI scheme will be implemented by MNRE through Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) as Implementing Agency. While, beneficiaries would be selected through a transparent bidding process.

"Preference will be given to manufacturers who set up higher capacity plants. However, in order to qualify for the bid, the applicant manufacturer will have to undertake to set up a manufacturing plant of minimum 1,000 MW capacity," the ministry said.

The scheme is also aimed at promoting the setting up of integrated plants for better quality control and competitiveness, to develop an ecosystem for sourcing of local material in solar manufacturing, generate employment, and reducing import dependence.

The guidelines further said that greenfield new solar PV module manufacturing units would be eligible for PLI and brownfield projects will also be allowed to participate under the eligibility criteria.

It added that though a manufacturer can bid for any megawatt capacity, the maximum capacity that can be awarded to one bidder under the PLI scheme remains 50 per cent of the bid capacity or 2,000 MW, whichever is less, to accommodate at least three manufacturers under the overall envelope of Rs 4,500 crore.

Regarding disbursement under the scheme, the guidelines added that the manufacturing units sanctioned under the programme would be eligible for getting PLI on the annual basis on sales of high efficiency solar PV modules for five years from commissioning or five years from scheduled commissioning date.

Solar PLI scheme to benefit 8-13 pc of incremental panels demand till FY30: Report

The Economic Times, 11/05/2021

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) on Tuesday said the solar production-linked Incentive (PLI) scheme will benefit 8-13 per cent of the photovoltaic energy plant requirement till 2029-30, and aid 20 gigawatt (GW) capacity development in the next five years.

"Ind-Ra estimates that the allocation of Rs 45 billion (Rs 4,500 crore) towards the solar modules manufacturing industry by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) can benet the sales of 20 GW from the capacity developed under the PLI scheme across the ve-year implementation period," according to a statement.

It added that it will happen assuming 100 per cent localisation (up to 30 GW in case of 65 per cent localisation).

It also means sanction of the PLI facility which will benefit 4-6 GW of sales annually over five years from commissioning of the beneficiary manufacturing facilities.

The scheme can facilitate additional 8-12 GW annual solar cell/ module manufacturing capacity in India. Sales up to 50 per cent of the manufacturing capacity set up by the winning bidder will benefit from PLI. This estimate assumes the base PLI rate of Rs 2.25 per watt power and entirely greenfield (new) expansion.

The capacity to benefit under the scheme may further reduce from the stated 20 GW level in case of the plants achieve better module efficiency and temperature coefficient than the minimum requirement defined in the notification.

India has set a target to install 280 GW of solar power plants by FY30. Out of this, about 240 GW is under pipeline or yet to be implemented. It means just 8-13 per cent of this planned requirement is going to benefit directly from the PLI scheme till FY30 (assuming localisation to be between 65 per cent and 100 per cent), apart from improving the domestic manufacturing capacity, it added.

The statement also said that as per an MNRE notification dated March 30, 2021, the overall extension in timelines for commissioning of solar power generation projects is limited to six months. And, solar power developers are walking on a tight rope, given that they need to commission projects well before April 1, 2022, when the 25 per cent/ 40 per cent basic customs duty kicks in for solar cells and modules, respectively.

These capacities will still have to come up based on imported modules, given that it will take time for domestic manufacturing capacities to set up.

Speed up electricity tariff orders: Centre to States

Energy World, 05/05/2021

New Delhi: The power ministry has written to 18 states and union territories, asking them to issue electricity tariff orders for the current year in line with provisions under the Electricity Act immediately.

The Centre had asked state regulatory commissions to issue tariff orders of all distribution licensees before April 1 of the tariff year and report compliance to the union power ministry by May 31 every year. Nearly 14 states have issued tariff orders in March while some others are in the process, sources said.

Sources said Union power secretary Alok Kumar has written to additional chief secretaries and electricity regulators of states like Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand , Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Punjab. The states also include West Bengal, Tripura, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh and UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The move is aimed at correcting the financial position of power distribution utilities in the country.

Kumar has sought immediate issuance of tariff orders for 2021-22 by these eighteen states. Nearly 14 states have issued tariff orders in March this year, while some are in the process.

The Central government has recently asked regulatory commissions to issue tariff orders of all distribution licensees before April 1 of the tariff year and report compliance to the Union power ministry by May 31 every year. In a communication to chairpersons of central and all state power regulatory bodies, the power ministry has sought compliance of legal provisions in the Electricity Act 2003 and the Tariff Policy 2016, which mandate timely determination of the adequate power tariffs by the electricity commissions.

Discom overdue outstanding to generation companies are at Rs 82,996 crore, data available with the Praapti portal showed. The average revenue gap of distribution utilities is in the range of 72 paise per unit and the regulatory assets are at Rs 78,000 crore.

Section 64 of the Electricity Act 2003 provides for determination of cost reflective tariff by appropriate commission within 120 days from receipt of tariff petition. Similarly, Tariff Policy 2016 states that the commissions should initiate tariff determination on a suo-moto basis in case the tariff petitions are not filed in time. It mandates commissions to ensure the tariff changes are brought into effect from the beginning of each financial year and under business as usual no regulatory assets --- deferred tariff hikes -- are created. The same has also been provided in an order of the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity passed in November 2011.

Besides, the liquidity infusion scheme of total Rs 1,30,000 crore special loans to distribution companies, the centre is soon likely to bring out a Rs 3 lakh crore reforms-linked distribution reforms-linked distribution reforms scheme which will disburse amount only when the discoms achieve set milestones. The government is also working on amendments in the Electricity Act, 2003 for delicencing power distribution segment to introduce competition.

India's power consumption grows nearly 25% in first week of May

The Economic Times, 09/05/2021

Power consumption in the country grew 25 per cent in the first week of May to 26.24 billion units (BU) over the same period last year, showing consistent recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to power ministry data.

Power consumption in the first week of May 2020 was 21.05 BU. The power consumption in the entire month of May last year was 102.08 BU.

On the other hand, peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, during the first week of this month remained well above the highest record of 166.22 GW in May 2020 except on May 2, when it was 161.14 GW.

During the first week of May this year, peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day touched the highest level of 168.78 GW (on May 6, 2021) and recorded a growth of nearly 22 per cent over 138.6 GW (peak met) recorded in the same period in 2020 (on May 7, 2020).

The power consumption in April grew 41 per cent to 119.27 BU..

Power consumption in April 2020 had dropped to 84.55 BU from 110.11 BU in the same month in 2019, mainly because of fewer economic activities following the imposition of lockdown by the government in the last week of March 2020 to contain the spread of deadly COVID-19.

The power consumption also fell in May 2020 to 102.08 BU from 120.02 BU in May 2019.

Similarly, peak power demand met or the highest power supply in a day also slumped to 132.73 GW in April last year from 176.81 GW in the same month in 2019, showing the impact of lockdown on economic activities.

The fewer economic activities also resulted in a fall of peak power demand met in May 2020 to 166.22 GW from 182.53 GW in May 2019.

Experts are of the view that high growth in power consumption as well as demand in May this year is mainly due to base eect but the data shows recovery so far even as the second strong wave of COVID-19 forced authorities to impose local lockdowns to contain deadly virus across the country.

They have cautioned that local lockdowns may derail recovery in commercial and industrial power consumption and demand.

After a gap of six months, power consumption had recorded a 4.6 per cent year-on-year growth in September 2020 and 11.6 per cent in October 2020. In November 2020, the power consumption growth slowed to 3.12 per cent, mainly due to the early onset of winters. In December 2020, power consumption grew by 4.5 per cent while it was up 4.4 per cent in January 2021.

Power consumption in February this year recorded at 103.25 BU compared to 103.81 BU last year.

But 2020 was a leap year. In March this year, the power consumption grew nearly 22 per cent to 120.63 BU compared to 98.95 BU in the same month of 2020.

Solar power majors get $3-billion shock from Supreme Court order

The Economic Times, 11/05/2021

A Supreme Court order that requires overhead power lines to be taken underground in the habitats of a critically endangered bird is likely to hurt the financial viability of solar projects in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Developers estimate the total cost to change the existing overhead wires to underground cables at Rs 22,000 crore, requiring a tari hike of 10-15% if they have to bear this entire cost, industry insiders said.

The companies developing projects in the region are among the biggest in the business, including Adani Green, ReNew Power, Hero Future Energies, SB Energy, Greenko and state-run NTPC.

The solar industry association now plans to approach the Supreme Court, seeking at least a partial relief on the order, as laying high-voltage cable underground is not feasible, they said.

The two states, which house many solar power projects, including the world's largest at Bhadla in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district, account for about a quarter of the total solar power production in India. The regions that house the projects are also habitats of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB), a tall and heavy bird with a wingspan of more than two metres. Only around 150 of these birds exist, according to wildlife experts, and some 15% die every year due to electrocution.

On January 9, ET reported the National Green Tribunal's order directing the Centre and the two states to install bird diverters on all existing power lines within four months.

Feasibility Report for Change

NGT also directed laying all new transmission lines underground to prevent more GIB fatalities. However, last month, the apex court ordered that all transmission lines, including existing ones, be made underground.

"If the court does not review the decision and if (it) is implemented in toto, then it would bleed the industry and make the projects unviable," said a top executive at one of the affected companies. "Further, it is noteworthy to mention that no further projects would be feasible to be set up in Rajasthan, which is the most promising area in India for the growth of solar."

As per the discussions at an interaction last week between the ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) and solar industry

representatives, low-voltage lines of 33 kV will cost Rs 84 lakh per kilometre to take underground, while for high-voltage lines of 220 kV, expense will be as high as Rs 28.8 crore a km. More than 2,500 kilometers of cables, including both high- and low-voltage, have to be laid underground as per the court ruling.

Emails to SB Energy, ReNew, Adani Green, Acme Solar, Hero Future Energies and NTPC were not answered till press time on Monday. MNRE officials and representatives from the Gujarat and Rajasthan governments also did not respond to queries. Tata Power declined to comment.

Priority & Potential Areas

Based on a 2019 report by the Wildlife Institute of India, the fight path of the birds — which are only seen in India and some parts of Pakistan — has been divided into 'priority' and 'potential' areas.

While the priority area will aect the solar projects by Adani Green and SoftBank-backed SB Energy, the potential area, which demarcates parts of west Rajasthan, will cover the 5,700-hectare Bhadla Solar Park.

Other players such as Tata Power Renewables, O2, Vena and Greenko will also be affected due to the geographical expanse of the potential area, which stretches from the western border of Rajasthan to Barmer, Jodhpur and Bikaner.

Wildlife conservationists said that if implemented in a timely manner, the steps ordered by the top court would reduce the death of these birds caused by powerline collisions. "(This) should become the norm for greener power lines across all bird migratory pathways within protected areas and near wetlands," said Yadvendradev Jhala, dean, Wildlife Institute of India.

Technical & Cost Challenges

There are technological and implementation challenges in laying underground high voltage transmission lines, said Shekhar Dutt, director general at the Solar Power Developers Association. "It is also felt there is very little impact of overhead transmission lines on GIB in potential areas, so high tech bird diverters can be selected in consultation with experts which can be very effective," he added.

Another industry executive, who did not want to be named, said the Rs 22,000-crore cost figure might be a conservative estimate, as it accounted for only laying underground 220 kV lines. "There are lines that go up to 400 kV and above that haven't yet been taken into account," this executive said.

State and central governments will bear some costs of the undergrounding, as they have "a duty cast to preserve the endangered species," as per the court order. They may pay for the transmission lines between the substations and end consumers, but developers will still bear the brunt — between the solar plant and substation, which makes up nearly 80% of the entire system.

While cost will go up, developers will get relief due to the 'change in law' provision in their power purchase agreements (PPAs), allowing them to raise taris. But distribution companies are likely to face challenges in passing the higher cost to consumers.

"Although existing projects will have a cushion of change in law and force majeure provisions of the PPA to mitigate risks, those claims will not be uncontested, considering the stakes involved," said Aditya K Singh, an associate partner at Link Legal.

COVID-19: MNRE grants time extension in commissioning of renewable energy projects

The Economic Times, 12/05/2021

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) on Wednesday announced a timeline extension in the scheduled commissioning date (SCD) of renewable energy projects considering

disruption due to the second wave of COVID-19 cases.

The ministry in its order said that RE projects being implemented through implementing agencies designated by the MNRE having their SCD on or after 1 April 2021 would be eligible to claim time-extension for completion of their project activities.

"The actual quantum of time-extension shall be decided in due course depending on the COVID-19 related developments that take place in the coming weeks," it added.

The ministry, however, added that such time-extensions were not to be used as a ground for claiming termination of power purchase agreement (PPA) or for claiming any increase in the project cost.

While there were no instructions from the central government for a countrywide lockdown, several states have taken various measures such as night curfew and weekend lockdown to contain the spread.

The ministry had received several representations for seeking time-extension on the grounds that there had been resurgence of COVID-19, leading to several states and union territories issuing instructions restricting mobility of people.

Last year, the ministry had provided a blanket time-extension of five months for RE projects on account of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown. In March this year, it said that further time-extension beyond five months could be granted by implementing agencies in exceptional cases. However, for any time-extension totalling beyond six months, a reference had to be made to the ministry.

6. Mobilités électriques

Welectric partners with MoEVing to accelerate adoption of electric vehicles

Energy World, 03/05/2021

Electric two-wheeler mobility start-up Welectric on Monday said it has partnered with MoEVing, another start-up working in the electrification of logistics sector, to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles in last-mile delivery operations.

Under the partnership, Welectric will provide 1,000 electric twowheelers (e2Ws) on lease with after-sales and maintenance support to MoEVing.

To kick-off the partnership, Welectric is delivering 60 e2Ws to MoEVing in Bangalore. Both companies plan to scale up this partnership to over 1,000 e2Ws across major cities in India in the next few quarters, the two companies said in a statement.

Commenting on the partnership, Welectric Founder and CEO Vikas Jain said, "partnership will allow moEVing to grow their business in an asset-light model without worrying about maintenance or aftermarket of their electric 2Ws."

Welectric's fast-growing B2B business is helping it forge strong industry partnerships and build expertise around performance and maintenance of e2Ws of different brands, he added.

MoEVing Founder & CEO Vikash Mishra said, "we will hit the 1,000 EV target very soon and hope to sign up for the next 10,000 EVs with Welectric. This asset-light approach helps us scale up the electric mobility transition in the last mile delivery space across the country.

" While Welectric focuses on solving finance, maintenance and aftermarket challenges for e2Ws, MoEVing is building a technology platform to accelerate electrification of the entire logistics space (2W, 3W and 4Ws) through an integrated approach of demand aggregation,

supply optimisation, and connected charging infrastructure, the statement said.

7. Environnement et qualité de l'air

Of world's 100 cities at greatest environmental risk, India has 43: Report

Buisness Standard, 13/05/2021

Asian cities face the greatest risk from environmental issues including air pollution and natural disasters, according to a report by research firm Verisk Maplecroft.

Of the 100 most vulnerable cities, 99 are in Asia, according to the report released on Thursday. Of those, 37 are in China and 43 are in India, the world's first and third biggest emitters of greenhouse gases respectively. Globally, 1.5 billion people live in 414 cities that are at high risk from pollution, water shortages, extreme heat, natural hazards and the physical impacts of climate change.

Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, topped the list of combined risk based on all nine factors analyzed by Verisk Maplecroft. India is home to 13 of the 20 riskiest cities in the world, a result of its extreme levels of air and water pollution. China's flood-prone Guangzhou and Dongguan topped the list of cities facing threats from natural hazards, followed by Japan's Osaka and Tokyo for being vulnerable to earthquakes and typhoons. Lima is the only city outside Asia among the top 100 most at-risk cities overall.

A significant danger for many cities is how climate change will amplify weather-related risks, said Will Nichols, Verisk Maplecroft's Head of Environment and Climate Change. "Higher temperatures and the increasing severity and frequency of extreme events will change the quality of living and economic growth prospects of many cities across the globe," he said.

African cities face some of the worst risks from climate change and have the least ability to mitigate those impacts. Glasgow was ranked the safest among the 576 cities examined for that factor.

"Environmental risk needs to be a central consideration when it comes to making your business, investments or real estate portfolio more resilient," said Nichols. The hope is that identifying these risks and stressing strategies for future climate scenarios will help investors can "gain a clearer view of the costs and benefits of investment decisions."

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