

# Uttar Pradesh govt to invest Rs 18K crore in coal-fired power plant

*This comes amid the reports that the Government of India is looking at facilitating easier funding for new coal-fired thermal power plants in the wake of a sharp jump in electricity demand*



Photo: Reuters

In a bid to increase the electricity production in the state, the Uttar Pradesh government will invest more than Rs 18,000 crore in a coal-fired thermal power plant in Sonbhadra district. The proposed thermal power unit 'Anpara E' will be set up by Meja Utpadan Nigam Private Limited, a joint venture of NTPC and UP Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL).

This comes amid the reports that the Government of India is looking at facilitating easier funding for new coal-fired thermal power plants in the wake of a sharp jump in electricity demand. "The 1,600 Megawatt (Mw) project entails an estimated cost of Rs 18,624 crore," UPRVUNL Chairman Ashish Kumar Goel said. The Nigam Board has okayed the proposal for the Anpara E unit, and now the proposal will be sent to the state government, he added.

The Nigam is gearing up to commission the first phase of two under-construction thermal power plants viz. Obra C (2x660 Mw) and Jawaharpur (2x660 Mw) in Sonbhadra and Etah districts respectively. Since, the energy demand peaks during the summer months, the UP power utility is ensuring the various thermal power projects in the pipeline or undergoing overhaul are ready by January next year.

The state is also taking measures for the safe disposal of fly ash that is generated at the plants from the burning of coal. The fly ash is commonly used in making roads, bricks, and concrete blocks as well as mixing in cement.

The state's current energy demand has already touched the level of 28,000 Mw a day. To meet this growing demand from different consumer segments including domestic, industry, agriculture, commercial, etc, the state is ramping up the power generation value chain through thermal power, renewable power, solar power, rooftop solar power, bioenergy, etc. To build a robust green energy portfolio and minimise damage to the environment from thermal projects, UP is targeting to achieve solar energy generation of 25,000 Mw in the long term. According to the state's Energy Minister AK Sharma, the state is planning to invite solar energy bids of almost 7,000 Mw. While solar power bids of 4,000 Mw will be floated in the first phase, the bidding for additional solar energy of 3,000 Mw will be undertaken thereafter.

Solar energy is likely to aid the state power utilities in cutting their financial losses, which are estimated at Rs 46 crore per day on account of line losses, subsidised power, and sub-optimal bill realisation.

The state has also drafted solar energy and bioenergy policies, whereas hydro energy policy is being hammered out and is likely to be announced soon.