
Private participation in nuclear power generation - ASSOCHAM

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The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India has urged Union Power Ministry to move a Cabinet note for seeking government approval to amend 1962 Atomic Energy Act to allow private sector participation in nuclear power generation.

Dr Swati Piramal president of ASSCHAM pointed out that “Almost a year has elapsed ever since India ended its Nuclear isolation by forging a nuclear alliance with United States of America, besides other economies for cooperation in nuclear energy generation.” She added that however, initiatives for roping in private power utilities’ involvement in nuclear energy have yet to commence from relevant quarters.

In a communication addressed to the Union Power Ministry, Dr Piramal said that “Private sector participation in nuclear power generation is still prohibited on account of necessary amendments to Atomic Energy Act of 1962.”

Amendments to this Act are necessary to enable private sector to foray into nuclear power generation although as many as 40 leading power utilities in private sector have conclusive plans to diversify into nuclear power, feels the ASSOCHAM.

Dr. Piramal said that such drawn up plans, would remain on paper and cannot be put into execution until government amends the 1962 Atomic Energy Act and include provisions in the amended Act for private sector participation in nuclear energy.

According to her, delay in making amendments in the Act, would further increase power shortages and prevent India record close to 9% GDP growth during remaining period of 11 five year plan and even subsequently. A robust growth of power sector is essential to help India register the projected GDP growth rate.

The ASSOCHAM, therefore has urged the government to develop a consensus in ruling alliance so that Atomic Energy Act is amended without any further delay and India moves on to take up nuclear power generation and make capacity addition of a minimum 20,000 MW through nuclear generation by 2020.

According to the ASSOCHAM, power utilities such as TATA’s, North East Power Company, JSW, Jaiprakash Associates, Reliance, GMR, Lanco etc are ready with their nuclear energy diversification drive and awaiting the proposed act to be amended.

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