

## Coal is still the mainstay, climate debate needs

### reformulation: Power minister RK Singh

Stating that the ‘coal versus renewable energy’ debate is “based on the wrong premises”, power minister RK Singh said the perspective of this issue “needs to be reformulated”.

He further said keeping in mind the issue of climate change, the country has already “more than tripled the renewable energy capacity in the last four years”. “If we cut down emissions from coal, the effect would be the same,” Singh said, speaking at an inter-ministerial panel at the India Energy Forum by CERA Week held here.

The country is working to attain the intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) target of reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% by 2030 from the 2005 level, as promised in the 2015 Paris agreement. To reduce emissions from coal-based power plants — the backbone of power generation in the country — the government has already mandated all such generation units to install emission control equipment.

Speaking in the same event, coal minister Pralhad Joshi said his ministry “is implementing coal washeries, permitting only super critical coal plants and planting trees for capturing carbon naturally”, to reduce the carbon footprint.

Echoing what the ministers said on energy transition, Mohammed Barkindo, secretary general, Opec, said: “Unfortunately, the current narrative seems to forget the nearly three billion people, as per IEA, who are facing energy poverty and have no access to clean cooking fuel.”

Calling India a “major driver of global oil demand,” Barkindo said he was “impressed by Prime Minister’s Modi’s vision on climate change in the recent UN summit in New York”.

Without naming the Saubhagya scheme, which recently connected 2.4 crore households with electricity, Barkindo said: “I congratulate India for its successes in combating energy poverty,” Barkindo said, adding that “colossal success to energy access is testament to social progress in India”.