

PM Modi on Energy Independence: Nuclear Expansion, Critical Minerals, and Defence Self-Reliance

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PM Modi Energy Independence Latest News

- In his Independence Day address from the Red Fort, PM Modi emphasized the urgent need for India to achieve self-reliance in energy and critical minerals.
- He linked this to the country's large petroleum import bill, highlighting how dependency drains resources that could otherwise support development, agriculture, and poverty alleviation.
- PM Modi announced a landmark policy shift by declaring that the government has "opened the doors" of nuclear energy to private participation.
- The aim is to expand India's nuclear power generation capacity tenfold by 2047, positioning nuclear energy as a major pillar of the country's clean energy future.

India's Heavy Energy Import Dependence

- Currently, India remains heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels:

- **Crude oil imports (2024-25):** \$137 billion
- **Petroleum products:** \$24 billion
- **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG):** \$15 billion
- Together, energy imports constituted **22.3% of total imports** in 2024-25, compared to 23% in 2023-24, according to data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).
- The **lakhs of crores spent on energy imports** could have been invested in India's long-term growth — building infrastructure, supporting farmers, and fighting poverty.
- By reducing dependency through self-reliance and clean energy expansion, India could redirect critical resources toward domestic priorities.

India's Push for Critical Mineral Self-Reliance

- PM Modi underlined the importance of **critical minerals** in powering key technologies across energy, industrial, and defence sectors.
- He announced that exploration is underway at over **1,200 sites** under the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**.
- So far, the Ministry of Mines has auctioned **24 blocks** and plans to auction **100 more by 2030**.
- However, experts caution that operationalising these blocks could take years due to regulatory bottlenecks.
- To fast-track progress, the government has set up a **Project Monitoring Unit (PMU)** to streamline approvals and expedite mine development.
- At the same time, India is diversifying its strategy by pursuing **overseas exploration and acquisitions**.
- This is supported by recent amendments to the **Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act**, which now allows the **National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET)** to fund international projects.

India's Nuclear Energy Expansion and Private Sector Entry

- In his Independence Day address, PM Modi also announced plans to increase India's **nuclear energy capacity tenfold by 2047**.
- Currently, the country's installed nuclear capacity stands at **8.8 GW**, contributing just under **2% to total electricity generation**.
- Ten nuclear reactors are operational, with further expansion underway.
- The government has also opened the nuclear sector to private participation.
- In the 2024-25 Budget, provisions were made for partnerships with private companies to finance and build **Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs)** for captive use, though operation will remain with NPCIL.
- Full-scale private involvement, however, will require amendments to the **Atomic Energy Act** and the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act**, with a task force examining issues such as fuel procurement, waste management, and safeguards.
- PM Modi also highlighted India's climate achievements, noting that the country has met its target of **50% non-fossil fuel electricity capacity five years ahead of schedule**.
- This marks a significant rise from 30% in 2015 and 38% in 2020, driven largely by growth in solar and wind power, along with nuclear and large hydro projects.

Operation Sindoor and Mission Sudarshan Chakra: India's Defence Self-Reliance Drive

- Operation Sindoor showcased India's growing defence self-reliance, with terror networks and Pakistan-based infrastructure dismantled using Made-in-India weapons.
- The operation signalled that India would no longer accept nuclear blackmail or external pressure, reinforcing its strategic autonomy.
- Building on this momentum, India announced **Mission Sudarshan Chakra**, inspired by Lord Krishna's legendary weapon.
- The initiative is aimed at neutralising enemy infiltrations and enhancing offensive and deterrent capabilities with rapid, precise, and powerful responses.
- The government emphasised that **indigenous innovation is key to future security**, urging Indian youth to develop advanced technologies such as jet engines within India. By 2035, India also plans to expand a nationwide security shield across all public places, highlighting its vision of comprehensive protection backed by self-reliant defence systems.

Source: IE | PIB

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