

Sukhumi solar energy policy

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Himachal chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Tuesday that the government would amend the energy policy to make the state self-reliant and a targeted to generate 500MW solar energy by December next year had been set.

Sukhu informed the assembly that in winter, Himachal buys electricity from neighbouring states at high rates, reducing which would help the government save INR1,000 crore annually. He was speaking in the discussion on a motion moved by Congress member Chaitanya Sharma about the renewable energy approach for secure future of Himachal.

The chief minister said that the government had set a target of making Himachal a "green state" by 2026 and in the next four months, state's largest solar power plant of 32MW would be established in Pekhuwala in Una district.

Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party of ignoring the state's interests, he said that the previous BJP government in Himachal gave Luhri and and Dhaulasidh hydropower projects to Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam on very easy terms and the state government would either take back the projects or revise the terms and condition to secure the interests of Himachal.

The BJP leaders expressed their ire when the chief minister blamed the Central government of obstructing the implementation of "water cess on hydropower projects".

Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur said the Union government had sent the letter to all the states concerned and pointed out that water cess was not being charged from central sector hydropower generating utilities by Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand governments.

Initiating the discussion, Chetanya Sharma said the chief minister has taken steps to implement the viewpoint on making Himachal Pradesh a green state by 2026 and the e-taxis start-up scheme for the youth has been implemented which proves he believes in action.

Independent MLA Hoshiyar Singh suggested that geothermal, biogas and wind energy projects should be encouraged. BJP leader Anil Sharma said that setting up of solar energy projects on barren lands should be encouraged to increase energy generation and employment.

Cabinet minister Rajesh Dharmani stressed on making the state self-sufficient in energy so that there was no need to purchase power from other states. BJP leader Trilok Jamwal said that the levy of water cess on



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projects for which memorandums of understanding had been signed long ago was wrong and cautioned that it would create an environment of uncertainty, which would affect investment in the state.

BJP protests over Cong"s unfulfilled poll guarantees

Ahead of proceeding of the assembly, legislators of Bharatiya Janata Party, the main opposition in the state, staged a protest over Congress" unfulfilled poll guarantees. The legislators wore posters around their neck and raised slogans, reminding the Congress about their promises.

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