

## Green Trails

As the country is waking up to the reality of an unprecedented power crisis, which has been in the making for months now, it becomes a testament to the need for India to work towards instituting a long-term plan for alternatives to cater to its growing domestic power needs. While it is the fall in coal stocks of power plants, to dangerously low levels, that is being paraded as the reason for the current and anticipated blackouts in different parts of the country, the fact remains that the current crisis is not just a product of shortage. It is equally and more so a product of erroneous foresight, and indiscriminate hoarding and stocking of coal reserves by both private and government power generators, distributors and energy regulators in the country. While the pandemic and the resultant lockdown were understandably bound to raise electricity demand, one wonders what stopped the powers-be from taking adequate measures to avert this crisis! The need for the switch to economically viable and decentralized renewable sources is at an all-time high today. The dilemma we are faced with today pertains to both our commitment as a country to reduce the carbon footprint and move towards net-zero emissions by the next few decades and access to cheap and financially feasible alternative energy models, especially with the increase in the cost of conventional energy sources. As we deliberate on our excessive reliance on coal and other fossils and the resultant conundrums, we also must spare a thought for the prevailing energy gap in the country and the exclusion of a large section from basic access to electricity. It is herein that we need to counter the theories on how an emphasis on renewables has brought us to the present state of crisis, and instead learn the right lessons from this crisis. Hence, let's start talking more about the need for a renewable restructuring of the current power system; a decentralized, community-oriented renewable re-engineering of the Indian energy sector.



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