

Wind power gets set for huge thrust

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China's wind power installed capacity is expected to exceed 30,000 megawatts (mW) by the end of 2010, up from 12,000 mW last year, an official with the National Energy Administration (NEA) said yesterday.

In order to achieve this target, the country needs to invest an additional 100 billion yuan at least in the sector, said Shi Lishan, deputy director of the new energy department under the NEA.



Road lamps powered by wind in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province.

China now has the fourth largest wind power capacity in the world. The sector has seen over 100 percent year-on-year growth in the past few years.

"Among all the clean energy sources, wind power is developing the fastest these days. The 30,000 mW target is achievable given the fast pace of growth," said Shi.

By the year 2020, China would have wind power capacity of 100,000 mW, accounting for around 10 percent of the country's total power generation capacity, he said.

China plans to build six wind power bases each with a capacity of 10,000 mW. Shi said these six bases would be completed by 2020.

Currently, wind power accounts for around 2 percent of China's total power generation. Industry insiders said, by 2020 wind power will likely surpass nuclear power as China's third-largest source of electricity, after thermal and hydropower.

As the world's second largest energy consumer, China has devised preferential policies to boost the development of wind energy. Currently, the country is charting a development plan for the new energy industry, which will reportedly involve an investment of 3 trillion yuan.

"There is no doubt that wind power will account for an important part of that blueprint, as it is now the most developed sector in the new energy area," said Shi.

Wind power has three distinctive advantages. It is renewable, little water consuming and emission-free. Development of wind power can help China achieve its environment protection and emission control targets, said Shi.

Wind power is "vital" as it is the cheapest form of renewable energy, Shi said.

However, Shi noted that there were still some problems in the sector. "Currently, our grid capacity cannot keep pace with the development of wind power, and it is hard for some wind power plants to connect to the grid." "We should improve our grid capacity to make sure all the wind power can be fully used."

China Longyuan Electric Power Group Corp, the country's leading wind power developer, said yesterday it plans to increase its installed capacity to 6,000 mW in 2010 from 2,630 mW now.

The company, which produces one third of the wind power in the country, has also embarked on its offshore wind power projects, said Huang Qun, vice-president of Longyuan.

China's major energy companies have all paid increasing attention to the development of wind power. The country's five major power producers have all started wind power businesses. China National Offshore Oil Corp has also started operating its first offshore wind power project.

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