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**JANUARY 2017**  
**POWER WATCH**



**Ashish Khanna, ED and CEO, Tata Power Solar**

**Solar**

**T**he year 2016 witnessed tremendous progress in India's journey to fulfil the solar mission and we anticipate sustained momentum in the sector going forward as well. India is a forerunner in the global solar energy sector with almost 9 GW of installed capacity. The initiatives undertaken by MNRE have been significant in creating a positive industry ecosystem. The year was also a good one for Tata Power Solar with several large projects being commissioned, including the 100 MW largest DCR project.

We believe 2017 can be a game changing year for the solar industry, especially as the momentum created over the last few years starts to move towards a tipping point. However, for that to happen, apart from continued focus on generation, the government should also look to build a strong and robust manufacturing sector. This will be vital to catapult India in becoming self-reliant from an energy PoV and also play a larger role in generating employment, facilitating inbound forex through exports and contributing to the overall growth of the economy.

It would be a great impetus for the solar sector if the Government focuses on providing better access to finance and capital at a competitive rate, especially for technology adoption and low cost storage solutions. Also, as we approach grid parity, it is important that the government gives increased prominence to quality of solar installations so that short-term benefit of low tariff is not at the cost of long term viability. Apart from these, providing direct subsidies, lower and better streamlined taxes and higher status to the sector for getting capex access will go a long way in creating a level playing field for domestic players. Ensuring implementation of net-metering and increased focus on rooftops and micro-grids, especially in areas with limited grid connectivity will help in bridging the current energy divide and shall encourage end-customers to adopt clean energy.