

Phase-II of Solar Mission awaiting Cabinet nod

M. Ramesh

New Delhi, Sept. 13

The launch of the much-awaited Phase-II of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission depends upon how soon the Union Cabinet approves the note submitted to it by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

Speaking at the 7th Renewable Energy India Expo 2013 in New Delhi, Tarun Kapur, Joint Secretary, MNRE, said that the note had been submitted just a few days back.

Kapur later told *Business Line* that if the Cabinet could not approve the note before the pre-election 'model code of conduct' kicks-in — expected on September 20 — then the government would have to seek permission from the Election Commission to roll out the Phase-II.

In this phase, the Mission seeks roll out 10,000 MW of solar power capacity by 2017, but will start with 750 MW. That the Phase-II launch is keenly awaited by the solar industry the world over was quite evident from the various conversations at the exhibition-cum-conference event.

The roll-out has been delayed. The draft guidelines were issued in December 2012, and the bidding process was expected to take place in June-July.

HELPS DOMESTIC FIRMS

Domestic solar equipment manufacturers are keenly awaiting the launch because half of the 750 MW capacity will come under the 'domestic content requirement' rule — they will have to use modules with India-made cells.

Ajay Goel, CEO, Tata Power Solar, said the rule will help domestic manufacturers, such as his company (which has 180 MW of cell capacity and a strong domestic market) provide a good base to build the business on.

Fortunately for Indian manufacturers, the European Union action of imposing anti-dumping duty on cells manufactured in China has resulted in taking off some of the competitiveness of the Chinese manufacturers. Consequently, the Indian companies are able to secure business from Europe.