

Montek bats for nuclear deal

India's Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia Wednesday batted for the India-US nuclear deal, over which the Left Front has threatened to withdraw support to the Congress-led government.

In a guarded remark, Ahluwalia told a gathering of academicians and researchers that India needed energy to maintain an enhanced growth rate and promote inclusive growth.

'Which is why the government is trying to convince the various political parties about the need of nuclear energy,' he said in an apparent reference to India-US nuclear deal but did not specify any political parties.

'If these discussions (India-US nuclear deal) fructify, we will be able to use imported energy,' he said.

Ahluwalia was Wednesday delivering the 13th Prof. G. Ram Reddy memorial lecture on 'Challenges of Inclusive Growth' organised by India's leading distance education university - the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) - here.

Ahluwalia said the country needed adequate energy to sustain the growth rate and thereby promote inclusive growth.

'Seventy percent petroleum consumption in India is based on imported crude oil,' Ahluwalia said, adding that the country must switch over to renewable sources of energy.

'The 11th Plan period envisages massive capacity building on the front of infrastructure, energy, education, health and other services,' he later told reporters.

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