

## Govt waives duty on products imported for nuclear plants

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**WITH RISING FOCUS** on reducing dependency on carbon-based fuel for electricity generation, the government has waived off basic customs duty (BCD) for a clutch of products which are imported for nuclear power plants and allocated more funds in atomic energy research.

“All goods for use in generation of nuclear power” and “all forms of uranium ores and concentrates for generation of nuclear power”, which earlier attracted BCD of 7.5% and 2.5%, respectively, will now have to pay no such duty. The present installed nuclear power capacity of 6,780 MW is seen to reach 13,480 MW by FY25.

The development comes with gross budgetary support towards nuclear fuel inventory rising 37% year-on-year to

₹3,122 crore. The department of atomic energy (DAE) imports uranium ore concentrate from firms in Kazakhstan and Canada, and a Russian company supplies enriched uranium pellets and fuel pellets of natural uranium dioxide. The country had spent around ₹1,800 crore in FY17 in buying these items. India has signed inter-governmental agreements with 17 nations, some of which are nuclear supplier countries.

The allocation on atomic research and development have been increased by 10% y-o-y to ₹6,264 crore. The DAE carries out indigenous research, in line with the country's ‘three-stage nuclear power programme’, to utilise the country's vast thorium reserves. The costly and complex three stage plan was chalked out in the 1950s, when people thought there would be uranium shortage.