

SCO members agree to jointly develop emerging fuel works

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY
New Delhi, 14 March

Nations belonging to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) have agreed to work closely together on emerging fuels, such as hydrogen and ammonia, and biofuels like ethanol, at a meeting of energy ministers of the grouping on Tuesday.

The move will see China, Russia and others collaborate with India on emerging fuel technology, energy modelling, and transition goals.

"The parties recognise that emerging fuels can play a critical role in promoting a circular economy by efficiently utilising biological resources to produce various high-value marketable products with least possible impact on the environment," read a joint statement issued after the meeting.

The grouping has also agreed to consider the possibility of developing joint emerging fuel projects for connecting major emerging fuel-producing and consuming countries. It will also allow for greater information exchange in the field of energy modelling.

The SCO is a political, economic, and security alliance of eight nations, historically led by Russia and China. It is considered the most important conclave in the Central Asian region, where other nations have a significant interest in trade, connectivity, and resource extraction.

The SCO comprises nine countries: China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

India assumed the rotational annual Presidency of the SCO last year — only the sixth summit India participates in as a full-fledged member.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said after the meeting that SCO nations have opted for a continued engagement rather than a standalone, one-time discussion. As a result, the grouping will be opened up for signatures on the proposed Global Biofuel Alliance, currently being pushed by India.

New Delhi will formally launch a global alliance on biofuels with like-minded

nations before the Group of Twenty leaders' summit in September, Puri had said earlier. The government has underscored achieving energy security of the country with the expressed aim of reducing import dependence. It envisages a strategic role for biofuels in the Indian energy basket.

Unlike other renewable energy sources, biomass can be converted directly into liquid fuels, called 'biofuels', to help meet transportation fuel needs.

Ethanol is a renewable fuel made from various plant materials, collectively known as 'biomass'.

In India, while the list of alternative fuel resources includes agriculture and forest residue, municipal solid waste, and cow dung, the government's main target is ethanol. Sugarcane ethanol is an alcohol-based fuel produced by the fermentation of sugarcane juice and molasses. Because it is a clean, affordable, and low-carbon biofuel, sugarcane ethanol has emerged as a leading renewable fuel for the transportation sector.

Move will see China, Russia, others collaborate with India on emerging fuel tech, energy modelling, and transition goals