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China Energy to expand ultra-low emission coal-fired power: executive

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SANHE, China (Reuters) - China Energy Group, the country's biggest power generator, will add more than 6 gigawatts (GW) of new ultra-low emission coal-fired capacity this year as it bids to meet growing electricity demand, a senior official with the firm said on Thursday.

The company also expected to build another 5 GW of low-emission capacity next year, Xiao Jianying, the head of the state-run firm's coal-fired power department, told Reuters.

"China still has quite a big demand for electricity. The government now supports regions with poor wind and solar resources to use coal-fired power ... it's a more practical measure, as gas is still too expensive," said Xiao.

China Energy operated coal-fired plants with a total capacity of 175 GW at the end of 2018, 77.4% of its total capacity and about 10% of the entire country's capacity.

Xiao said the company would gradually shut down small and polluting coal-fired power units and replace them with efficient ones, noting that total capacity would continue to increase but at a slower rate of growth.

The firm is also planning to launch another carbon capture and storage (CCS) project in northwest China next year as part of its efforts to reduce the environmental impact of using coal, company officials said. It already runs a CCS plant at its coal-to-oil facility in Erdos in Inner Mongolia.

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China, the world’s biggest greenhouse gas emitter, has vowed to control new coal production and new coal-fired power capacity as part of its commitments to curb pollution and tackle global warming. However, it has shown signs of relaxing restrictions in recent months amid an economic slowdown.

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This was a big shift from two winters ago when authorities forced millions of northern households to convert from coal to natural gas or electricity in a bid to curb smog.

China aims to bring greenhouse gas emissions to a peak by “around 2030” and raise the share of non-fossil fuels in its total energy mix to 20% by the end of the next decade, up from 15% in 2020. Those targets could be strengthened next year.

But it has been under fire for allowing large numbers of new coal-fired power plants. An academic study published in March said China restarted construction on more than 50 GW of suspended coal power plants last year.

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China Energy also has ambitions to export more of its low emission coal-fired power technology. Officials said the company planned more investments in Indonesia, and was also studying proposals to build a coal-fired plant in Greece.

China uses ultra-low emissions technology at about 80% of its total coal-fired capacity. The technology cuts smog particles down to a minimum, but does little to curb climate-warming carbon emissions.

Reporting by Muyu Xu and David Stanway; editing by Richard Pullin

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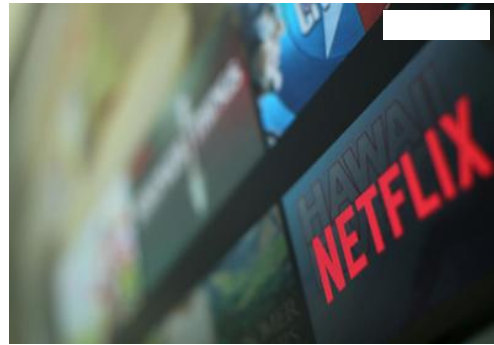


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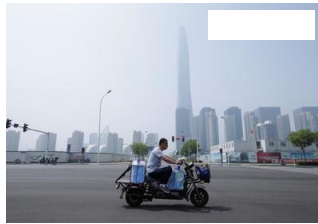
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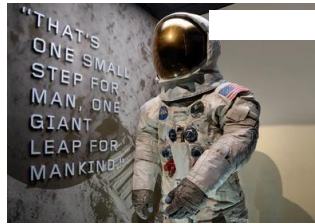
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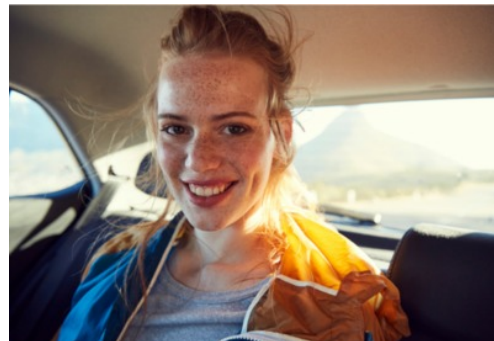
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