

Pakistan's Energy Crisis – A way out : Talk by Dr. Samar Mubarakmand, Member (S&T), Planning Commission.

Dr. Samar Mubarakmand, Member, Planning Commission gave a talk on “Pakistan’s Energy Crisis – A way out” at Lahore Gymkhana on 26th June 2010. The session was attended by about 500 members of the club. Dr. Samar Mubarakmand gave a detailed overview of the energy situation in Pakistan and said that in view of limited water resources of the country, the hydro-power could not meet the energy requirements. Alternate energy sources such as solar energy, wind energy etc. has also not been exploited. He indicated that initial cost of solar panels was exorbitant, which made it impossible for the common man to use it. The natural gas resources were also depleting very fast. He said that Pakistan had vast resources of lignite coal at Thar which had been assessed as the second largest resources of coal in the world. Dr. Mubarakmand indicated that Thar coal was difficult to mine because of presence of large column of water over the coal reserves. Consequently, underground coal gasification (UCG) was the most appropriate mechanism to utilize this resource and get coal gas, which will be used to produce electricity. For this purpose, a pilot plant for generation of 100 MW electricity has been initially proposed. Dr. Samar also indicated that R&D work has also been initiated at various R&D institutes/ universities to convert coal gas into diesel. The participants appreciated the talk and showed lot of concern over the energy crisis of the country. The talk was followed by Q&A sessions in which the participant’s focus was on power plants & private sector participation in the coal project, solar energy prospects, conversion of coal gas into methane, etc. The discussion continued over a cup of tea.