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# How green are our companies

**T**he double-edged sword of finite fossil fuels and global warming is a cause for much tension in multilateral government negotiations for emission targets. But, for the corporate world, "green" can be a mantra with a dual advantage: it's the right thing to adopt, not just as an environmentally responsible entity, but also—more important—as a profitable proposition. In India, too, companies are realizing this fact.

IBM's recent launch of the second phase of its Project Big Green in India, selling greener technology infrastructures, was on the back of a successful

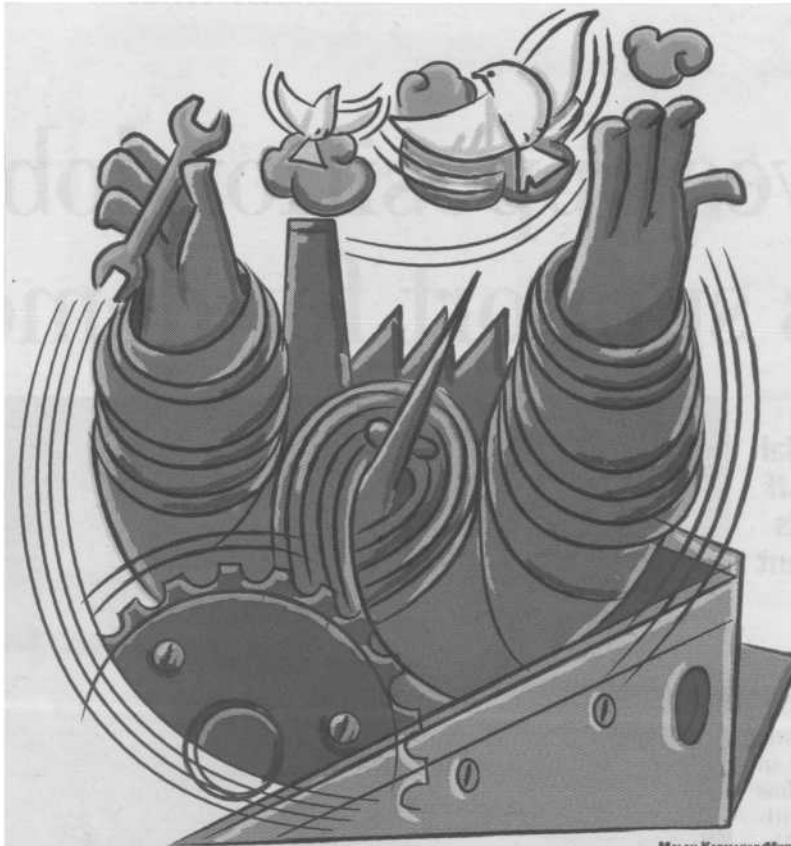
first phase. It's new data centre designs offer a clear solution in a range of sectors such as telecom and finance for a problem that's only growing. IBM says its designs can help reduce energy consumption by up to 50%. As a new IDC report on data centre services shows, more Indian firms will face "power and cooling" challenges in managing their IT infrastructure—the figure can go from 17% of Indian companies in 2007 to 22% by 2009.

But green projects seem to be primarily an immediate need-based response for us. Few would not grab a solution that reduces electricity needs

when erratic supply is threatening their operations. Or are firms in India looking at the big picture of managing energy and other natural resources sustainably?

Last week, another study—a global enterprise survey by GreenFactor—showed Indian firms scoring higher over 10 other countries in sensitivity to and support of green technology—using non-toxic materials, recycling, et al. We have instances such as the Wipro Technology Centre in Gurgaon that was rated as one of Asia's most energy-efficient office buildings this year. There's other—anecdotal—evidence that environmental awareness is increasing in Indian industry. But the momentum is not yet strong.

In the West, consumer behaviour has helped on that front—firms find they can gain customer loyalty by adopting green practices. For example, US-based Frito-Lay's cam-



paign using solar-powered billboards to sell chips made in a solar-powered factory this year has helped increase sales.

We, too, need to identify with the idea of conservation on a broad scale. Perhaps once it takes on an aspirational value, consumer behaviour shifts can drive the business viability of going green. To that end,

consumer electronics and cellphone firms' plans to launch eco-friendly products and create a brand positioning along that line is a new, promising sign.

*Will Indian consumers encourage companies to go green? Write to us at [views@livemint.com](mailto:views@livemint.com)*