



In Solar Power, India Begins Living Up To Its Own Ambitions

1 message

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Source

KHADODA, INDIA, December 29, 2011: Every five days or so, in a marriage of low and high tech, field hands with long-handled dust mops wipe down each of the 36,000 solar panels at a 63-acre installation operated by Azure Power. The site is one of the biggest examples of India's ambitious plan to use solar energy to help modernize its notoriously underpowered national electricity grid, and reduce its dependence on coal-fired power plants.

Azure Power has a contract to provide solar-generated electricity to a state-government electric utility. Inderpreet Wadhwa, Azure's chief executive, predicted that within a few years solar power would be competitive in price with India's conventionally generated electricity.

Two years ago, Indian policy makers said that by the year 2020 they would drastically increase the nation's use of solar power from virtually nothing to 20,000 megawatts -- enough electricity to power the equivalent of up to 3.3 million modern American homes during daylight hours when the panels are at their most productive. Many analysts said it could not be done. But, now the doubters are taking back their words.

Dozens of developers like Azure, because of aggressive government subsidies and a large drop in the global price of solar panels, are covering India's northwestern plains -- including this village of 2,000 people -- with gleaming solar panels. So far, India uses only about 140 megawatts, including 10 megawatts used by the Azure installation, which can provide enough power to serve a town of 50,000 people, according to the company. But analysts say that the national 20,000 megawatt goal is achievable and that India could reach those numbers even a few years before 2020.

India still significantly lags behind European countries in the use of solar. Germany, for example, had 17,000

megawatts of solar power capacity at the end of 2010. But India, which gets more than 300 days of sunlight a year, is a more suitable place to generate solar power. And being behind is now benefiting India, as panel prices plummet, enabling it to spend far less to set up solar farms than countries that pioneered the technology.

More at source.

Take care, With Lots of Love and Wishes,
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Harih Om!
