

Central govt's push to solar energy empowers more to make the switch

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Mumbai: The number of BEST electricity consumers in island city switching to rooftop solar photovoltaic panel installations is seeing a steady rise. Latest statistics released by the undertaking on Friday shows as many as 349 consumers have opted for such rooftop panels so far under the recently announced central scheme.

The maximum such consumers are in A ward (89 connections), followed by D and F/North ward with 51 connections each. While 79 residential consumers had rooftop panels below 20kWp (kilo watts peak) capacity of generation, there are 88 consumers/housing societies who went for panels above 20kWp, and this number is likely to increase, said officials.

As for commercial users, such as shops/offices, 97 consumers have opted for the solar panels while 77 institutions/public service organisations have got it installed on rooftops. Those who have solar rooftops can save monthly electricity bills through Net Metering, said officials. BEST had recently announced a 40% subsidy for solar rooftop installations in buildings. The undertaking is catering to a total 580kWp of solar power capacity in the island city with financial assistance from the Centre.

Other power utility firms, such as [Adani Electricity](#) and [Tata Power](#) in Mumbai, had also announced similar solar rooftop schemes with support from the ministry of new and [renewable](#) energy in [Delhi](#).

Residential consumers in island city had opted for a minimum 1kWp solar panel, which generates 1,400-1,500 units annually. This comes to an average of 125 units per month. A net metering system ensures that whatever solar power is generated goes to the grid and is adjusted against the consumers' monthly power bill.

For instance, if you generate 125 units through solar power in a month, and consume 300 units a month at your residence, you will have to pay for just 175 units after deducting units generated by a solar rooftop. The savings could range from Rs 800 to Rs 2,400 a month, depending on 1-3kWp of solar panel installed, officials said.