

U.P. govt to install solar rooftops on 25K Vns households in just 2 months

After PMO's missive, UPNEDA devises multi-pronged strategy to achieve feat; Rs 225 cr govt subsidy to be disbursed to customers

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LUCKNOW : The Uttar Pradesh government is going to start a high-voltage campaign very soon to install solar rooftops on 25,000 households in Varanasi city in just two months' time in a groundbreaking initiative aimed at promoting green and sustainable energy practices in PM Narendra Modi's Lok Sabha constituency.

The campaign, according to officials in the know of things, is being launched after the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) recently wrote a letter to the U.P. government, desiring such an action in Varanasi city.

The central and the state governments, it is estimated, will have to shell out a subsidy of Rs



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150 crore and Rs 75 crore respectively to 25,000 households that purchase solar panels. "We have already prepared a multi-pronged strategy to achieve the goal of installing 25,000 solar rooftops in Varanasi in just two months as desired by the PMO," Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) director Anupam Shukla confirmed, adding, "The campaign will be kicked off very soon."

A solar rooftop on-grid system is a type of solar energy system connected to the main electrical grid. In this system highly subsidised by the government, solar panels are installed on the roof



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of a building to convert sunlight into electricity.

Any excess electricity that is generated by solar panels is sent back to the grid through the bidirectional meter and the user concerned is paid for that excess power by way of adjustment in their power bills.

As of now, Varanasi boasts only 664 rooftop consumers (588 of them residential) with connected load of 27 MW, despite having approximately 3.26 lakh electricity connections and 2.25 lakh households. The ambitious project is spearheaded by the UPNEDA, serving

as the nodal agency for this significant task.

The strategy devised by UPNEDA to install solar rooftops at 25,000 households in Varanasi city encompasses a multifaceted approach, including an extensive publicity campaign to raise awareness among residents, coupled with meticulous logistics and supply arrangements.

"The 25,000-household rooftop installation target in Varanasi city in two months has been strategized by keeping a target of solarising around 250 houses in each 100 wards of the city with the Remote Sensing Application Centre, Lucknow, assisting UPNEDA in finding houses having substantial space and shadow free area, using Geospatial technology," another official revealed. Considering the significance of the campaign, 10 project officers (POs) of UPNEDA will be stationed in Varanasi for next two months to oversee the implementation of the programme (1 project officer for every 10 wards of the Varanasi Municipal Corporation).

UPNEDA has also finalised 100 solar panel vendors, 25 manufacturers and distributors, five invertors manufacturers, two

net meter manufacturers that will set up their offices in Varanasi city to install solar rooftops.

As a part of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign, bulk messaging will be sent to around 3 lakh power consumers, and pamphlets will be distributed to as many consumers.

Workforce of 500 'Suryamitras' (ITI diploma holders in solar) trained by UPNEDA will be deployed in 100 wards for customer acquisition and radio jingles, print media advertisements and cinema hall bytes will also be used for faster outreach.

"Door-to-door outreach programs along with booth camps will be organised for detailed information to customers and applicants to encourage them to install solar rooftops at their buildings," the official said. "A QR code too has been developed by UPNEDA and the same will be distributed to consumers for easy registration," he added.

He further said arrangements for easy financing for customers and vendors had also been made. The state government, it is learnt, may launch similar campaigns in some other cities in the months to come, depending on the Kashi experience.