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## Uttar Pradesh govt looks to utilise water bodies for floating solar farms

*The latest move comes as UP is targeting 22,000 Mw of solar energy generation in 4-5 years*

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Photo: Bloomberg

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government is looking to utilise water bodies for floating solar farms and generate almost 11,000 megawatt (Mw) of green energy.

The latest move comes as UP is targeting 22,000 Mw of solar energy generation in 4-5 years.

The water bodies including canals, dams, embankments, and reservoirs will be harnessed to set up grid-connected floating photovoltaic, or solar power stations.

Floating solar farms are solar panels mounted on a buoyant anchor structure, such as polyethylene, that floats on water.

Most of the floating plants are likely to come up in Bundelkhand and Purvanchal (eastern UP) spanning Jhansi, Lalitpur, Mahoba, Hamirpur, Chitrakoot, Mirzapur, Chandauli, and Sonbhadra.

The state government has set up a high-level committee for identifying water bodies and drafting norms for allotting them for the proposed solar farms.

UP New and Renewable Energy Development Agency has also conducted feasibility studies of some water bodies for prospective allotment.

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The state irrigation department will allot the water bodies to the alternative energy department for allotment to developers and, at the same time, ensure that the projects do not disturb the local ecology or aquaculture.

In India, floating solar plants are already functional in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

UP's Additional Chief Secretary for Energy Mahesh Gupta said the scheme would gain momentum after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The state irrigation department owns and manages a network of nearly 75,000 km of canals, 34,000 government tube wells, 92 reservoirs and 280 lift irrigation canals.

In August 2019, the Yogi Adityanath government had cleared the proposal of renewable energy majors ReNew Power and Shapoorji Pallonji to collectively invest Rs 750 crore in a 150 Mw floating solar power project in UP.

The project was proposed at the existing Rihand hydro power project of UP Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited in Sonbhadra.

ReNew Power and Shapoorji Pallonji were mandated to develop 100 Mw and 50 Mw of solar power capacity, respectively, and supply the power to UP Power Corporation Limited for 25 years after commissioning at the rate of Rs 3.36 per unit.

Power backup and solar products company Luminous Power Technologies is also exploring the potential for rooftop solar energy in the state. The Adani group is among the leading companies to have invested in the state's green energy initiatives.

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