

Business Standard

UP plans to install solar power plants along 296-km Bundelkhand Expressway

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The Uttar Pradesh government plans to install solar power plants along both sides of the 296-km Bundelkhand Expressway.

According to GEAPP (Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet) -- a global alliance for green energy transition -- it has conducted a study and found that 450 MW solar power plants can be installed on both sides of the highway.

GEAPP said it has also prepared a detailed project report (DPR) which has been approved by the state government.

"In the study, we found that 450 MW solar power plants can be installed on both sides. We presented the study to the state government and they have approved it," Saurabh Kumar, vice-chairman of GEAPP, told PTI on Sunday.

On August 9, Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi and Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh spoke to various stakeholders and solar energy experts in Lucknow and made them aware of every aspect of this project.

"We are now assisting UPEIDA (Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority) in bidding for the project and we hope that the project will be ready for commissioning in the next 15 months," said Kumar, who is also a retired IAS officer.

Kumar said that UPEIDA has asked GEAPP to conduct similar studies for four other expressways in the state.

In a way, this will become a model for future expressways, he said, adding, "according to our estimate, the cost of this project will be around Rs 1,800 crore and the rate of electricity produced from it will be Rs 4 to 4.50 per unit. This will also be a model of land use for energy projects."

Kumar further said that solar power plants will be installed on 15 metres of space along both sides of the 296-km Bundelkhand Expressway. This can lead to electrification of the entire expressway.

Besides, the installation of electric charging stations along the highway can also be encouraged, which will help in removing the biggest obstacle towards adoption of electric mobility i.e. lack of adequate charging facilities.

He said that this is the first project of its kind in India on this scale. This project will also be beneficial for the nearby villages, as they will get access to clean energy. This will increase the beauty of the expressway as well as provide employment.

Asked about the major areas that need to be focused to make Uttar Pradesh a hub of renewable energy, Kumar said, "Arid areas like Bundelkhand have immense potential for renewable energy. But the main challenge in the state is the availability of land because a large part of it is agricultural land. There is a need to identify such opportunities where we can get maximum benefit in small pieces of land."

GEAPP, founded by Rockefeller and Ikea foundations and the Bezos Earth Fund, is an alliance of entrepreneurs, governments, technology, policy, and financing partners working together to help developing countries in their green energy transition journey.

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syndicated feed.)

First Published: Aug 18 2024 | 5:03 PM IST

Page URL :https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/up-plans-to-install-solar-power-plants-along-296-km-bundelkhand-expressway-124081800286_1.html