

# GOVERNMENT PLANNING TO LIGHT UP BORDER WITH SOLAR POWER PLANTS

NEW DELHI: The government plans to light up national border with solar power plants, some of which could also fence the areas. The proposal, a brainchild of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is to set up 1,000-mw plants on defense land and supply the electricity at a fixed price of Rs 5.5 per unit for 25 years.

The proposal aims at providing electricity access to armed forces which are the largest consumers of diesel in the country.

The proposal comes at a time when the Centre plans to de-control diesel prices.



The government had in the budget documents indicated de-regulating diesel prices in the current financial year.

Presently, under-recovery on sale of diesel stands at Rs 1.78 per litre.

The new and renewable energy ministry has prepared the draft proposal that will now be circulated for inter-ministerial consultations before it is put before the Union Cabinet for approval, a senior government official said. "The grid-based

projects will be bid out to solar projects developers with a condition that they should use made-in India equipment.

The plants could fence borders at places which need to be illuminated," he said.

The idea to build solar energy projects along national borders was first mooted by Modi during his interaction with the officials of new and renewable energy ministry.

"The plan is to tap the solar potential in collaboration with the defense ministry at border areas which are mostly barren or abandoned lands," an official in the new and renewable energy ministry said.

Minister of state for power, coal and renewable energy Piyush Goyal on Friday said that the government was concerned about large number of households which do not have electricity access and therefore was planning to deploy renewable energy sources in a big way.

The minister met solar power producers, equipment manufacturers along with officials in the renewable and defence ministries on Friday.