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Has proposed India's first ever national consortium on solar thermal energy

IIT-B turns to the sun for power

Mihika Basu

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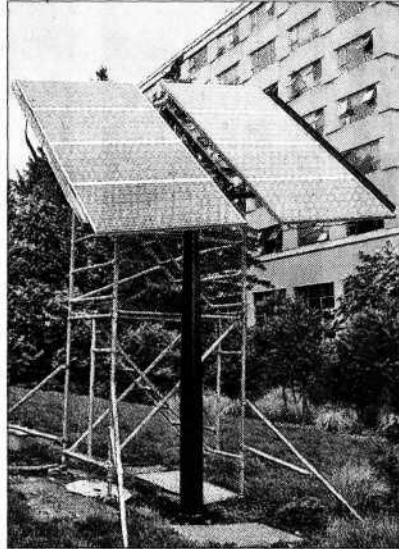
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Given the huge gap between the demand and supply of electricity in India, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Bombay wants to create a national resource centre for solar thermal power generation.

"Nearly 50 per cent of households in India do not have electricity. It is estimated that 10,00,000 MW of power will have to be added in the next 10 years. One option worth looking at is solar thermal power," said Rangan Banerjee, head, Department of Energy Science and Engineering (DESE), IIT-Bombay.

(IIT-Bombay now proposes to build solar thermal power plants in India in a demonstration-cum-research facility, which would help in developing indigenous capability and serve as a national resource centre and testing facility.)

The idea is to build the country's first consortium of industries and research organisations in this area.



"We intend to have a high-visibility, national impact research programme. The US and Europe have already built

such consortiums, but it will be a first in India," said Banerjee.

As a first step, DESE organised a workshop on Monday to discuss details and identify consortium partners. The workshop, sponsored by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, also reviewed the status of various solar thermal power routes in the Indian context.

Three approaches were decided upon — medium temperature power generation, high temperature solar tower concept and distributed (smaller range) power generation.

While IIT-Bombay is likely to take the lead in medium temperature power generation, it will facilitate the other two. The Maharashtra Energy Development Agency has also committed to support the venture and will provide the land in Maharashtra, said Banerjee.

A detailed techno-economic proposal focussing on aspects like prototype, R&D and technological goals, will be prepared by the institute within six months.