



Industry urged to create 'Solar Valleys' and cash in on huge business opportunity through Solar Mission

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, today launched the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission, with a clarion call to industry to create 'Solar Valleys' on the lines of Silicon Valleys that are spurring the Indian IT industry across India.

"These valleys will become the hubs for solar science, engineering and research, fabrication and manufacturing", and Indian industry should see the Solar Mission as a huge business opportunity," Dr. Manmohan Singh said while launching the Mission and inaugurating the Solar Energy Conclave 2010 organized by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and FICCI. Terming the Mission as one of the major priorities of the second term of the government the Prime Minister congratulated Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Shri Shyam Saran for the work they have done in bringing this to fruition. Shri Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture, Shri Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission and Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State (I/C) for Environment and Forests were also present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister said that the Mission has the potential to provide significant multipliers in our efforts for transformation of India's rural economy. Observing that solar energy, in its decentralized and distributed applications, is already beginning to light the lives of tens of millions of India's energy-poor citizens, he said that the rapid spread of solar lighting systems, solar water pumps and other solar power-based rural applications can change the face of India's rural economy. "We intend to significantly expand such applications through this Mission," he added.

The Prime Minister said that the target of 20,000 MW of solar generating capacity by the end of the 13th Plan period was ambitious, adding that "I do sincerely believe that the target is doable and that we should work single-mindedly to achieve it as a priority national endeavour."

In this context, Dr. Manmohan Singh said that there exists in our country immense talent and research capabilities already engaged in the solar energy field both in the private and public sectors. "It is clear that a large number of Ministries and authorities will have to work in tandem if we are to make a success of this important Mission. The Solar Mission should evolve as a single national platform for coordination among our scientific, industrial and regulatory establishments in a synergetic manner," he emphasized.

The Prime Minister said that technological innovation would be a key factor in ensuring the success of the Solar Mission. "We will need to find ways of reducing the space intensity of current solar applications, including through the use of nano-technology. Cost-effective and convenient storage of solar energy beyond daylight hours will be critical to its emergence as a mainstream source of power. In the meantime, we may need to explore hybrid solutions, combining solar power generation with gas, biomass or even coal-based power," Dr. Manmohan Singh pointed out.

He said that the increased use of solar energy is a central component of our strategy to bring about a strategic shift from our current reliance on fossil fuels to a pattern of sustainable growth based on renewable and clean sources of energy and expressed the hope that "this solar Mission will also establish India as a global leader in solar energy, not just in terms of solar power generation but also in solar manufacturing and generation of this technology."

The National Solar Mission has the pride of place in India's National Action Plan on Climate

Change, Dr. Manmohan Singh said. Its success has the potential of transforming India's energy prospects, and contributing also to national as well as global efforts to combat climate change. "This Mission is one of the major priorities of the second term of our government," he declared.

The Prime Minister noted that the regulatory and incentive framework unveiled by Dr. Farooq Abdullah had been carefully crafted with several innovative features. "We expect that it will lead to a rapid scale up of capacity. This will encourage technological innovation and generate economies of scale, thereby leading to a steady lowering of costs. Once parity with conventional power tariff is achieved, there will be no technological or economic constraint to the rapid and large-scale expansion of solar power thereafter," he said.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Union Minister for MNRE, in his key note address, observed that Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission envisages major participation of private sector by setting up grid connected solar power projects on Build Own and Operate basis. They will be eligible to get preferential tariff for solar power fed to the grid. In addition, private sector will continue to be engaged in setting up of manufacturing units in the country. The Minister said that the private sector is also expected to be a major user of various types of solar energy systems & devices.

Under the National Solar Mission, Dr Abdullah said that three major initiatives are proposed to be undertaken: (i) create volumes which will allow large scale domestic manufacture, (ii) announce a long term policy to purchase power And (iii) support R&D to reduce material consumption and improve efficiency and develop new materials and storage methods. The implementation of the Solar Mission would proceed on the basis of the technology advancements and cost reduction, which would be necessary for rapid scale up and to achieve the target of 20,000 MW of power by 2022.

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission targets 1,100 MW grid solar power, 7 million sq meters solar collectors and 200 MW off grid solar applications in first phase by 2013, and 20,000 MW grid solar power, 20 million sq meters solar collectors and 2,000 MW off grid solar applications by the year 2022.

The inaugural session of the Conclave was also addressed by Shri. Deepak Gupta, Secretary, MNRE and Shri Harsh Pati Singhanian, President, FICCI.

Over 900 delegates including investors, developers, members of academia, research and industry, policy makers from Central and State Governments, implementing agencies, manufacturers & business groups, members of academia, financial Institutions, etc participated in the Conclave. About 100 NRIs, including foreign companies from USA, UK, Canada, Russia, France, Japan, Singapore, Dubai, China, UAE, Kenya, etc also took active part in the Conclave.

Research & development is the key element of the overall approach of establishing India as the global leader in solar energy. The R&D strategy includes basic research, applied research, technology validation and demonstration, R&D infrastructure in public private partnership and Centre of Excellence in thematic areas. As a part of these new initiatives, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, laid the foundation stone of a number of projects under Academia-Industry-Government partnership at the Solar Energy Centre in its campus on Gurgaon-Faridabad Road on 10th January 2010.