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Solar power set to light border areas

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The border areas of Punjab are all set to go solar as the Punjab Energy Development Authority is planning to install a large number of solar-powered streetlights and water heating systems in public buildings in border areas of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Ferozepur districts.

Ninety per cent of the cost of installing these systems in public buildings, including colleges, schools, hospitals and gurdwaras, would be borne by the Punjab Energy Development Authority (PEDA). The rest (10 per cent) would be taken care of by local bodies like panchayats and nagar panchayats.

PEDA has also planned to install one lakh 'gobar' gas plants or bio-gas units in rural areas over the next one year. The agency has been providing a subsidy of 30 per cent for those switching over to bio-gas plants. As many as 48,904 such units have already been set up in Punjab villages.

"The 'gobar' gas plants have helped rural people, especially those having milch animals, cut on LPG costs," said PEDA chairman Manjit Singh.

The agency has installed solar systems in Parliament and has been told to install an 85-KV solar plant in Rashtrapati Bhawan at a cost of Rs 3 crore. "We will install a power house in Rashtrapati

BRIGHT MOVE

■ PEDA to install solar streetlights and water heaters in public buildings in border areas of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Ferozepur districts

■ 90% subsidy to be provided by PEDA while the rest of the cost would be borne by local civic bodies, says PEDA chief



Manjit Singh (in pic)

■ One lakh bio-gas plants also to be installed in rural areas by 2013

Bhawan within six months," said Manjit Singh. Besides, it would be installing a similar system in Punjab Governor's house in Chandigarh.

"It is not that the project is meant only for border areas, it will be implemented in rest of Punjab as well. But, the only difference will be that panchayats and local bodies in other areas will have to cough up more money as subsidy in other areas will only be 30 per cent and not 90 per cent, as is being offered in border areas. A subsidy of 30 per cent on renewable energy products like solar lights, inverters, cookers, lanterns and water heaters has been extended to individuals as well," he said. He said hoteliers, factory owners and individuals in Jalandhar district were saving Rs 22.29 lakh a year after installing water heaters.

