



Pratibha Devi Singh Patil
President of India



Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister of India

Message

ON the occasion of 60th Anniversary of the Day when India proclaimed itself a Republic, I extend my warm greetings to the friendly people of Bangladesh and to my fellow countrymen living here.

For six decades India has been a democratic Republic and has been guided by the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The 60th milestone is marked with the many successes that we have achieved in different fields. We can look at our achievements with justifiable pride. Our constitution, ethos of secularism, regular holding of free and fair elections, fundamental rights, apolitical armed forces, all have been sustained in the world's largest democracy. Today, the world looks at us as an engine of economic growth in addressing the challenges posed by global economic downturn.

India and Bangladesh enjoy bonds of history, language and culture, and share commitment to democracy, pluralism and rule of law. People of India and Bangladesh have witnessed beginning of a new phase in bilateral relations with the path-breaking visit of Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, to India from January 10 to 13, 2010. The Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh agreed to put in place a comprehensive framework of cooperation for development of the two countries, encapsulating their mutually shared vision for the future, which would include cooperation in security, water resources, power, transportation, connectivity, tourism and education. They agreed on a vision for the future in the pursuit of common good -- bilaterally, regionally and globally.

India is committed to partner with Bangladesh in its economic development. Speaking at the ceremony for presentation of the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament, and Development for 2009 to H.E. Sheikh Hasina on January 12, 2010, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said, "I reiterate our commitment to work together with the Government and people of Bangladesh to shape brighter future for our people and to enhance their common prosperity and development."

During the visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh, both leaders agreed to address an entire range of developmental issues of direct interest to Bangladesh, including railways, transportation, dredging, power grid connectivity, human resource development, investment and trade. In this context, India has agreed to extend a line of credit of US\$ 1 billion for a range of projects, including railway infrastructure, supply of BG locomotives and passenger coaches, rehabilitation of Saidpur Workshop, procurement of buses and dredging projects. India has also agreed to supply 250 MW electricity to Bangladesh. India will support upgradation of BSTI with a view to building capacity on certification. Government of India would offer 300 scholarships annually for five years to students from Bangladesh for studying and training in Universities and training institutions in India.

With a view to reviving traditional links that remained disrupted since independence, India has agreed to facilitate transit for Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan. India has agreed that trucks for movement from Bhutan and Nepal be allowed to enter 200 meters into Zero Point at Banglabandh.

We firmly believe that continued economic development of India is inextricably linked to the prosperity and development of its neighbours, including Bangladesh. In pursuit of this, India has been following a policy of non-reciprocity and positive asymmetry which is reflective in our unilateral initiatives such as providing duty free access to products from SAARC LDCs, including Bangladesh, to Indian market; reduction of a number of items of direct interest to Bangladesh from India's negative list; and allowing duty free access for 8 million pieces of readymade Bangladeshi garments to India.

The menace of terrorism poses a major threat to peace and stability in the world, and security remains a priority for both India and Bangladesh. While expressing satisfaction that the people of both countries have rejected violence, extremism and terrorism, the leaders of India and Bangladesh have resolved to work together to strengthen forces of democracy and moderation. They reiterated the assurance that the territory of either country would not be allowed for activities inimical to the other and resolved not to allow their territories to be used by terrorist/militant and insurgent organisations.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the support extended by the friendly people of Bangladesh to strengthen the traditional bonds of friendship between our two countries and look forward to their continuing cooperation in operationalising various areas of cooperation identified by the leaders of India and Bangladesh.

I wish you all a peaceful, happy, successful and prosperous year ahead.



Rajeev Mitter
High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh

India commits to renewable energy to fuel growth

JOYDEEP GUPTA

AS the world grapples with a long-term energy crisis, a fastexpanding Indian economy is prospecting for new sources of fuel growth. And its quest for non-polluting green energy is seeing renewed emphasis on non-conventional supplies to double the installed capacity from such sources to 27,000 MW over the next three years, involving an investment of \$16 billion.

India, in fact, already has one of the highest percentages of renewable energy to its overall generation capacity in the world. The country has developed such green power capacity of over 13,000 MW, which is about eight percent of the total installed potential, contributing about three percent to the electricity mix.

The Indian government's target is now to bring the share of renewable energy to 12 percent of the total power capacity in the country by 2012, which will again be one of the highest planned in the world. "We are doing remarkably well in generating power from renewable resources. We are at the fourth spot after Germany, Spain and the US in harnessing wind energy alone," said Minister for New and Renewable Energy Vilas Muttemwar.

"Still there is much more potential that goes unused," the minister told a global seminar on non-conventional energy in the Indian capital recently, adding that India has the potential of generating 70,000 MW of power from wind energy.

Data with official agencies show that a major contribution of 9,000 MW, so far, has come from wind power - almost entirely through private investment. Now, India's wind power industry is set to witness a structural shift, away from a captive power and tax-driven market to utility-scale development, experts maintain.

The small hydro schemes of up to 25 MW per project are next in line with a total capacity of 2,200 MW, while biomass power projects with a combined capacity of 650 MW, based on combustion of crop residues and agro-industrial wastes, have also been set up by private developers. Apart from this, surplus power of about 900 MW is being fed to the grid from bagasse cogeneration projects, particularly in private sugar

mills.

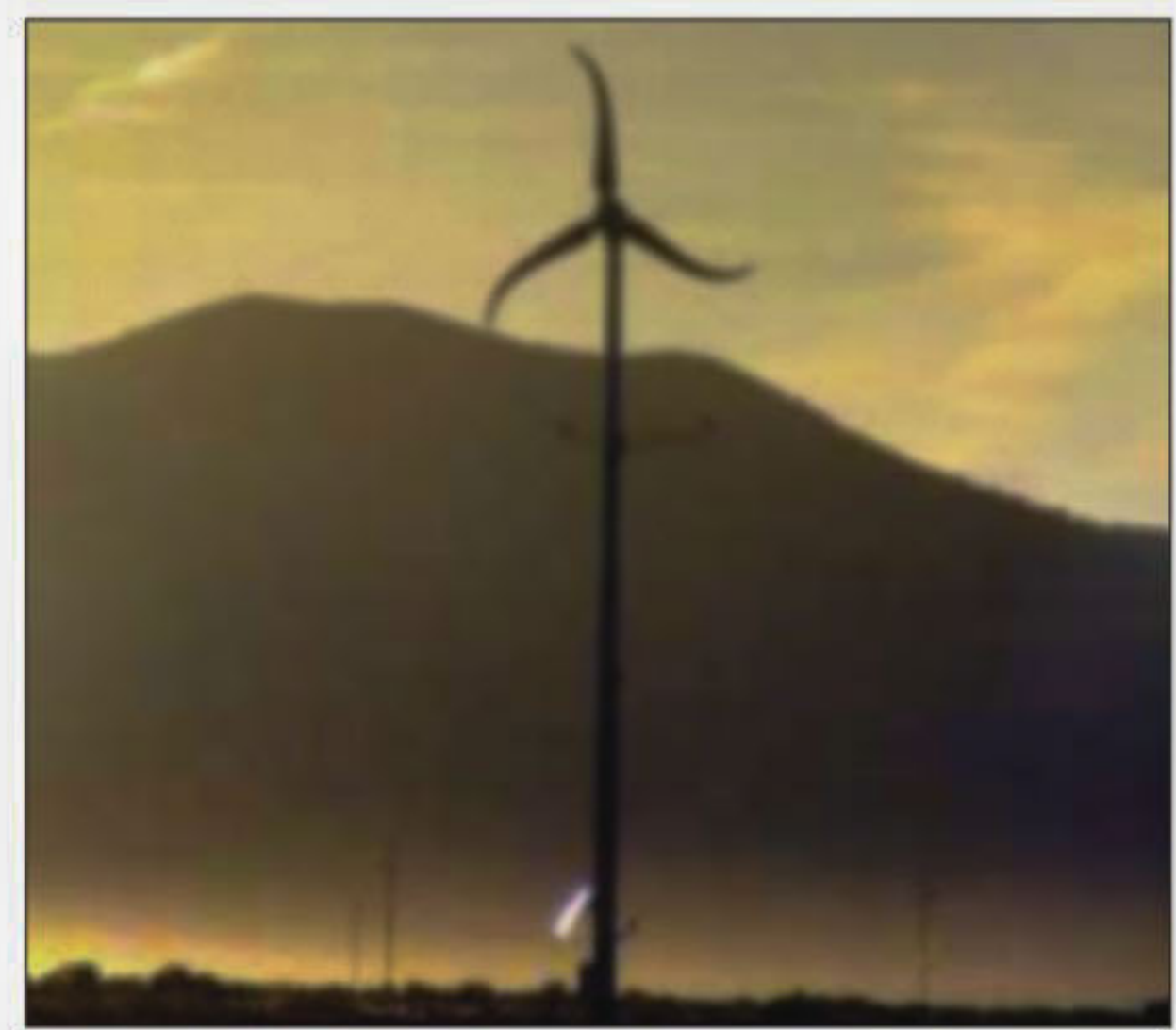
According to global consultancy Ernst and Young, India ranks third after the US and Germany in its "Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index" and a key driver for renewable power development in the country is the evolving policy and regulatory framework. The Electricity Act of 2003, for example, provides for the state regulators to specify a minimum percentage of power to be procured from renewable sources.

State governments are also laying emphasis on clean sources of energy, with 16 of them fixing their renewable portfolio standards of at least 10 percent for overall renewable energy purchase. The National Electricity Policy also seeks to encourage private sector participation, and the tariff policy calls upon state regulators to provide preferential rates for the purchase of renewable power.

India also realises the impact of thermal and other conventional sources on the fragile environment and its intent in this area is specified in the National Action Plan on Climate Change unveiled in June 2008.

One of the eight pillars of this plan is a National Solar Mission with a stated target of generating 20,000 MW of solar power by 2020.

The country evidently has



India has one of the highest percentages of renewable energies to its overall generation capacity in the world.

considerable potential for solar power generation as well. A pilot programme has been launched for grid-connected solar projects for which tariff support will be provided on energy fed to the grid. Indian labs are now working feverishly towards improving solar photovoltaic cells and improving solar thermal technologies.

"Solar power is expected to become economically feasible by 2015," said Anil K. Gupta, former secretary in the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources.

One major advantage of generating renewable electricity, experts say, is these sources can be largely decentralised, which makes it easier to distribute power to India's vast rural population. Decentralised generation and distribution in rural areas has now been de-licensed under the Electricity Act. (Abridged)

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ELECTRICITY FOR ALL
India's agenda for power and empowerment

DEVIRUPA MITRA

A hit Hindi commercial movie in 2004, starring one of India's most popular film stars, had a subplot: How to bring power to a remote fictional village called Charanpur. In one scene, an old woman's wrinkled face lights up from the yellow glow of an electric bulb inside her modest hut. For the first time, electricity had reached her hamlet.

This can be termed the celluloid illustration of the hunger in rural India, comprising a little over 600,000 villages, to be part of the development mainstream.

For India to power its growth and emerge as an economic powerhouse, its hinterland needed development. For that, electricity would be an essential component.

What has emerged from that vision is rural electrification programme called the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Plan), named after late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who launched the ambitious project April 5, 2005, promised electricity for all households by 2012.

"Electrification of rural India is a key foundation stone in the modernisation of our agriculture and in improving the quality of life of our citizens, particularly those living in rural India," the prime minister had said.

"We have already taken far too long a time to bring the light and energy that electrification provides to rural India. We cannot delay the implementation of this basic commitment any longer. We shall honour it this time," he said.

"As a country of over one billion people and a dynamic economy growing at rates of over eight percent per annum, we are going to consume more energy and we will have there-

fore to generate this energy," said Manmohan Singh, who had promised "a new deal for rural India" soon after he assumed office.

In the 60 years since India's independence in 1947, only 44 percent of the country's rural households could be given access to electricity and more than 100,000 villages remained to be electrified. The new programme called for providing access for power to 78 million rural households in five years - to accomplish in five years, what had taken six decades.

In 2005, the government decided to supplement the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana by launching the rural electrification policy. Its primary goal was to enhance the consumption of electricity to at least 1,000 KW an hour - still lower than the global average of 2,596 KW - from a little over 600 KW currently.

"This target at first sight seemed to be over ambitious. But when one considers the actual work being done on the ground today, it is very much achievable," said Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde.

"We will take electricity to every village by 2009 and every household by 2012," he said last week, adding: "Under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana, 53,000 villages have been electrified so far and by 2012, everyone will get electricity."

The task is daunting, but the government is determined to achieve it. As per official studies, electricity in 1983 was used in 81 percent of the urban households, compared to 36 percent of their rural counterparts. This increased substantially by 2002 to 92 percent of urban households and 53 percent in rural areas, but that also meant that 47 percent in the hinterland remained without electricity. (Abridged)

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