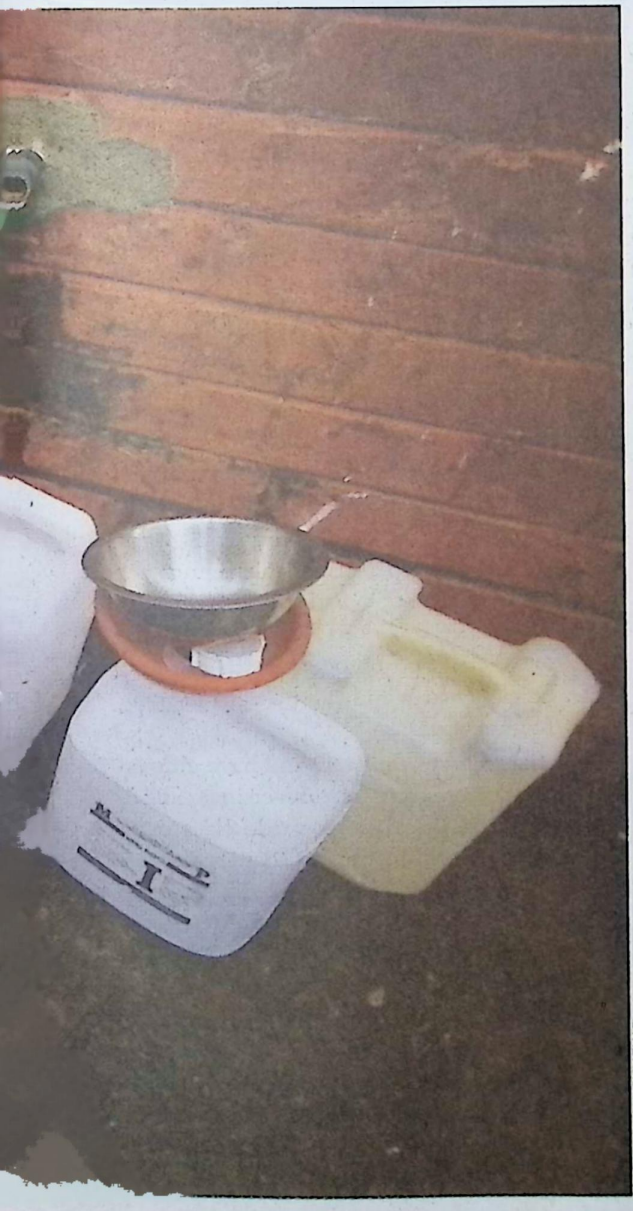
These special zones would have solar mini grids, improved cooking stoves, rain water harvesting, organic fertilizers, nurseries and tree plantations etc . The houses would be built sturdily on especially elevated bases. We could promote this type of villages especially in coastal areas suffering from cyclones, tidal surges.

Solar farms in CHT: We can set up solar panels in Chittagong Hill Tracts around Mirasarai and Fatickchari to produce and feed electricity to grid lines .

Local manufacturing units and green jobs: We are already creating green jobs and businesses through renewable energy technologies, especially in the rural areas. We have provided employment to bright engineers and given them training both home and abroad. Most importantly, we have taken the assembly of solar accessories to the rural areas through our women. We can further this by creating green enterprise zones especially in the rural areas to assemble world class solar products for both local and international consumption. China can be our model in this regard. We can also train human resource for exporting outside.



AM AHAD/DRIKNEWS

Greening our vehicles: We can also easily green our transport. We can use solar and battery-powered hybrids to run small vehicles. We already see battery-powered three-wheelers in Dhaka, and University of Dhaka has also piloted a solar battery hybrid model. Instead of charging themselves at gas stations, solar hybrid vehicles can charge themselves at the solar battery stations. These vehicles can also store extra power and transmit it to the grid.

Ushering in the Green Century

Our government has set a target to distribute electricity to every corner of the country by 2020. My dream is to ensure that at least half our people, i.e. 75 million out of 150 million people can have access to affordable clean, environment friendly renewable energy by that time, if not earlier. I want green energy to complement other government efforts to take electricity to all by 2020.

How do we go ahead to explore the full potential of renewable energy technologies? How do we accelerate growth and build on what we have achieved?

This decade has brought tremendous changes especially in the lifestyle of the rural people. Nearly 59 per cent of the rural people have access to televisions, and mobile phone subscription is growing at a tremendous rate.

Mechanisation is becoming a way of life. Farm animals have been replaced by power tillers, and rice threshing takes place at mechanised mills. This means a huge rural potential market for renewable energy technologies if we take into account increased disposable income, growing consumption, and couple this with the great strides renewable technologies have made in terms of efficiency and cost reduction.

As for the urban people, lack of power has been devastating. The urbanites are desperately looking for alternatives and renewable energy can be that alternative.

Despite the above, existing companies are reaching only a tiny portion of the expanding