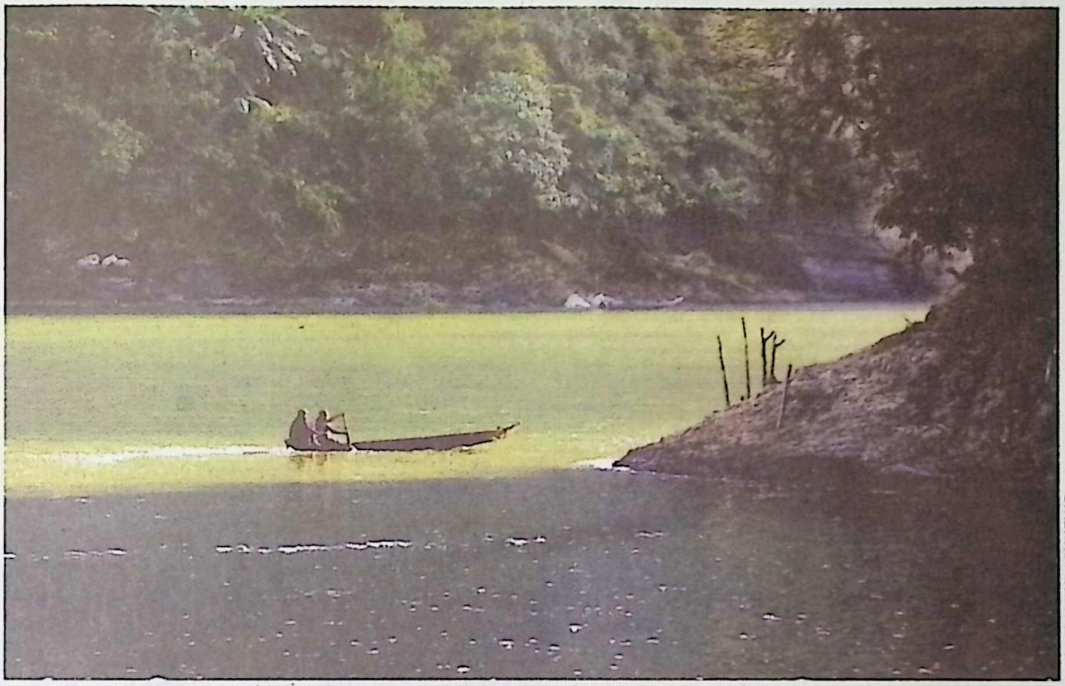


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manufacturing cost and subsequently prices of the accessories especially batteries. If all VAT/ taxes are removed , then we can reduce the cost of a Solar Home System from by 40 per cent. One of the main challenges in popularising Solar Energy Systems in the urban areas is the high price of batteries and invertors. If we can reduce these costs, then solar can become competitive with diesel generators and IPS. Our government and people will both benefit from reduced cost for importing diesel or kerosene, less load shedding and more productivity.

Easy access to credit for green business: It is heartening to see that Bangladesh Bank has set up a special credit scheme to popularise green energy. However, most end-users are not aware of this scheme and the banks do not have a distribution channel to reach potential customers. The scheme would be more productive if it targeted service providers directly, instead of customers. Currently service providers can access the fund at 10 per cent interest rate, which is too high, and the payment is only made after the product has been installed. This does not allow an organisation any fund for purchasing the system or retaining its distributional channel. We can amend this scheme to provide very low interest loans to entrepreneurs for carrying out green businesses including setting up battery/solar factories, etc.

Feed in tariff policy for urban dwellers: Feed in tariff policy had been very effective in promoting solar in most western countries. India also has a feed in tariff policy. Under this policy, a solar-system installer can sell electricity to the national grid at a slightly higher price. This will encourage urban dwellers to install solar-systems and feed the extra electricity to grid line. We can transform every urban building into a powerhouse through the effective implementation of feed in tariff policy.

I imagine a day when world-class solar panels and other accessories would be assembled on the soil of Bangladesh to be exported to other countries, after meeting domestic demand. Renewable energy can reduce oil dependency, save valuable foreign currency, protect us against environmental hazard, and especially help to create green businesses and green jobs that we can export outside to earn foreign currency.

Bangladesh could be in the forefront of ushering a true Green Energy Revolution to the whole world, if we all join our hands together and make it a reality.

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