

MP govt to provide subsidised solar water pumps to farmers

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Editorial Comment: Though electric power supplied through the grid will be saved by employing solar water pumps and a more extensive agricultural area brought under irrigation, the sustainability of the extraction of ground and surface water would need to be examined. One way people are using to prevent overextraction is by collectivising groundwater. For an example please see the story **Groundwater as Commons demonstrated in Mahbubnagar, Telangana.**

Dr. Mihir Shah committee on **Restructuring the CWC and CGWB** submitted its report in 2016 - titled **A 21st Century Institutional Architecture for India's Water Reforms** (checked on 10 May 2017). It states that

The new challenge is to manage our aquifers sustainably so that we make sure we do not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

BHOPAL: The Madhya Pradesh government would soon provide nearly 18,500 solar-powered water pumps to farmers in the state at subsidised rates.

"We are going to make available solar borewell and surface pumps fitted with remote monitoring system to the farmers under the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister [Solar Pump Scheme](#) shortly," New and Renewable Energy Department Principal Secretary Manu Srivastava told PTI.

"The rates of solar pumps already arrived at after the bidding are the lowest in the country. The performance of each pump can be monitored on a real-time basis from anywhere in the world," he said.

[MP Urja Vikas Nigam](#) (MPUVN) would be the nodal agency to make available the solar pumps to the farmers, he said.

"We have already picked up the firms (through bidding) which are going to supply [solar power](#) to the state. The rates are much below the benchmark prices of Government of India," Srivastava, who is also the managing director of MPUVN, said.

"The rates of the direct current pumps are the lowest in the country. These pumps will have a five-year maintenance provided under a contract," he said.

"There is also a provision of comprehensive insurance of the complete pump system for five years," he said.

"It is for the first time that any state government has embarked on such a huge programme of supply of solar pumps to farmers," Srivastava claimed.

He said that earlier Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan governments had provided 11,000 and 10,000 solar pumps respectively to farmers at subsidised rates.

"The sale of green energy pumps in such a huge number is going to save crores of rupees of the MP government annually," said Rajendra Kothari, the former director of [PHD Chamber of Industries and Commerce](#) (MP and Chhattisgarh).

A senior official of the state energy department said in the last fiscal, the MP government provided power subsidy of Rs 70 billion (Rs 7,000 crore) to farmers for use of the water pumps.

The sale of solar pumps is going to rev up the agricultural productivity of the state, he said.

MP has the highest agricultural growth rate of over 20 per cent since last couple of years, the official said.

The use of solar pumps will increase the cultivable land area, reduce dependence on diesel pumps and make multi-cropping possible, he said.

This would also help in doubling the income of farmers and provide sustainable livelihood on a long-term basis, he said.

"The use of solar pumps is bound to reduce carbon foot-print. These pumps, driven by green energy, are bound to come as a boon for the marginalised farmers of tribal dominated districts like Mandla, Dindori, Chhindwara, Seoni, Balaghat, Alirajpur, Jhabua," he said.

The sale of these pumps is likely to reduce the distribution losses of the cash-strapped [MP Power Management Company](#) (MPPMC) Limited and power distribution companies (discoms), a senior power official said.

The revenue losses of the discoms are high due to non-payment of electricity dues in Bhind, Morena, Sheopur, Shivpuri and Gwalior districts, he added.

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