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Solar power from Corporation buildings in 2 yrs

Staff Reporter

Civic body advances deadline by a year.

Solar energy will soon contribute to the power requirements of the 3,500 buildings of Chennai Corporation. The civic body has set a two-year deadline for the installation of solar panels in all its buildings.

The civic body will install solar panels in the 25,000 sq ft area on top of the new Ripon Buildings Annexe. However, Ripon Buildings will not have the panels as their weight is likely to affect the heritage building.

A few months ago, the civic body announced that in three years' time, all its buildings would produce solar power.

Now, the deadline has been advanced by a year and efforts are under way to speed up the process. Schools, hospitals, emergency obstetric care centres, community centres and office buildings will all generate their own power.

Other large buildings where a considerable amount of solar power is likely to be generated include Communicable Diseases Hospital in Tondiarpet. The terrace of the building has over 60,000 sq ft of open space.

A few months ago, the civic body initiated a pilot project in four of Chennai Corporation's 15 zonal offices. It commissioned six solar power plants, at a cost of Rs. 16 lakh, to light up portions of such buildings.

It announced that Basin Bridge zonal office will have the capacity to generate 5 kilowatts of solar power. The zonal offices at Nungambakkam, Kodambakkam and Adyar; street light office at Shenoy Nagar and the corporation's electrical lab and stores in Chintadripet have one kilowatt capacity plants, said officials.

The civic body has sought guidance relating to specifications and norms from the Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency.

The solar power supply is part of the civic body's efforts to become more environment-friendly.

Initially, Chennai Corporation had announced a plan to tap solar energy in 2009. But its implementation got delayed by a few years.

Residents in areas such as Kalakshetra Colony last week requested the Corporation for assistance in installing solar power generating facilities in residential properties.

The civic body with the support of Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency is likely to help the residents find the cheapest equipment for tapping solar power.