

Solar, wind farms soon on India-Pak border

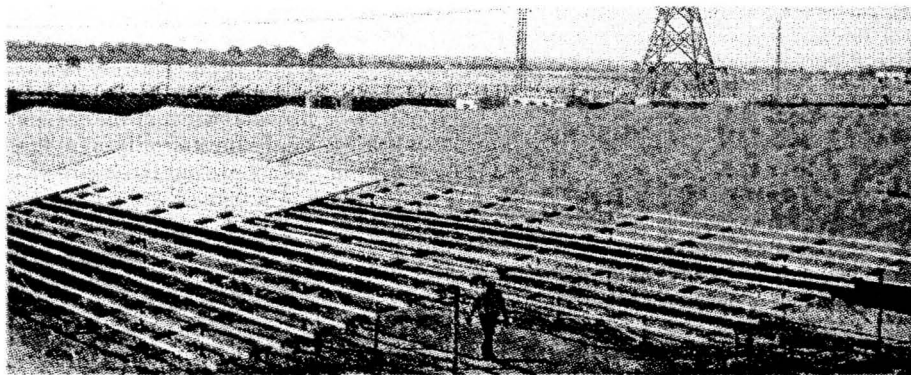
FROM PAGE 1

jects be installed along 20km of international border. He also desired that renewable energy be used to generate drinking water in desert areas close to the border.

Accordingly, the Ministry has requested both Rajasthan and Gujarat to identify suitable land near international border (20-25km strip) where solar and wind projects can be installed," according to a government document reviewed by *Mint*.

As part of its commitments to combat climate change, the government has proposed that state-run companies build massive clean energy parks at a cost of around \$2 billion each, with built-in incentives to ensure states and operators are invested in the success of the parks.

The proposed renewable energy power parks of 2,000MW each will help developers achieve economies of scale and further bring down solar and wind power tariffs.



The Centre wants state-run firms to build massive clean energy parks at a cost of \$2 billion each. AP

"We should consciously utilize wastelands. Why should good agricultural land be used for setting up such projects?" said another government official, who did not want to be named.

"We have seen that in some areas, agricultural land gets diverted for setting up clean energy projects, which in turn raises the question of food security."

Setting up such strips will further bolster India's image of a clean energy champion at a time the world is grappling with concerns related to climate change.

"These are desert areas with no habitats. These are large stretches that can be utilized post defence clearances because security is paramount," said the second government official cited earlier.

India has set a target of achieving 175GW of clean energy capacity by 2022 under its climate commitments

India's clean energy sector is going through a crisis. With record low solar and wind power tariffs, banks are wary of lending to developers as they suspect the viability of projects that have agreed to sell power at rock-bottom tariffs.

There are other problems such as delays in payment by state-run power distribution companies that range from two months to 15 months and non-allocation of land-to-wind power projects, as well as transmission- and connectivity-related challenges.