

HINDUSTAN TIMES

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Big solar is leaving rooftop systems in dust

Reuters

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SAN FRANCISCO: Solar power is on pace for the first time this year to contribute more new electricity to the grid than will any other form of energy – a feat driven more by economics than green mandates.

The cost of electricity from large-scale solar installations now is comparable to and sometimes cheaper than natural gas-fired power, even without incentives aimed at promoting environmentally friendly power, according to industry players and outside cost studies.

Today, large systems that sell directly to utilities are expected to account for more than 70% of new solar added to the grid this year, according to industry research firm GTM Research.

Unsubsidised utility-scale solar power costs \$50 to \$70 per



■ Solar panels are shown on top of a housing complex in California, United States

REUTERS FILE

megawatt-hour (or Rs 3.35-4.7 a kilowatt hour), compared with \$52 to \$78 for the most efficient type of gas plant, according to investment bank Lazard.

Generating power from residential rooftop panels is far more expensive, ranging from \$184 to \$300 a MWh (Rs 12.4-20.1 a kilo-

watt hour) before subsidies, the report said.

“If you take a solar panel from someone’s rooftop and put it in a field, the amount you would pay for that power drops precipitously,” said Matt Freedman, an attorney with California ratepayer advocate The Utility

Reform Network. “What’s the magic of having it on the rooftop? It’s not clear.”

Rooftop installers such as SolarCity enjoyed rapid growth thanks in part to marketing that peddles the romance and freedom of generating emissions-free power at home. And, for homeowners in states with favorable policies, rooftop panels can be a good investment.

But the math only works in places with so-called “net metering” laws, which require utilities to buy the electricity rooftop panels generate at prices far above what they pay for centralised power. To what extent governments and ratepayers should support rooftop solar is a matter of debate in several state legislatures and utility commissions.

Rooftop solar’s dependence on incentives is a key reason investors have punished solar stocks in the last year.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

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■ India to add 4,300MW Wind Capacity in 2016-17: Tanti



BHUI India's wind power capacity is set to grow 30% or 4,300 MW in 2016-17, helped by capacity addition in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, among others, said Suzlon Group chairman Tulsi Tanti. At present, the total wind power installed capacity in the country is around 27 GW, accounting for about 9% of India's total installed capacity. "India is a very promising and demanding market. It is set to grow by 30% annually. In 2016-17, the country will add about 4,300 MW of wind power," said Tanti. Speaking from Germany, Tanti said: "Most capacity will be added by Andhra Pradesh, followed by Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Some will be added in Tamil Nadu."

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

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L&T Power bags \$71.3-m order from Mitsbuishi

Larsen & Toubro Limited (L&T) through its joint venture companies L&T-MHPS Boilers Private (LMB) and L&T-MHPS Turbine Generators (LMTG) has secured export orders worth \$71.3 million from Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Limited (MHPS), company said in a statement. LMB contract includes supply of pressure parts for 2 x 1000 MW power plant in Indonesia and contains furnace header, panel, coils and piping. LMB has already executed eight MHPS export orders for the supply of pressure parts, pulverisers and engineering services to Middle East, Africa and South East Asia.

