

State gets country's maiden solar-powered petrol pump

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KOLKATA: The first-of-its-kind petrol pump in India, completely functioning on solar energy and promising zero usage of conventional sources of energy for electricity generation, came up in the state on Friday on Eastern Bypass connecting Siliguri and New Jalpaiguri.

Indian Oil officials confirmed that though the use of solar energy in petrol pumps has been experimented in phases over the months, but a full-fledged gas station running 24 hours on solar energy is obviously a first. The project, jointly developed by Indian Oil and Sulekha Works, would hopefully prove to be a path-breaker for other such initiatives located in remote areas and places where conventional sources of electricity are yet to arrive.

"The sun rays absorbed by the solar panels would be stored in batteries or solar photo voltaic cells that would generate the electricity required for functioning of the petrol pump. We would be using digital inverters of capacity up to 15 kilowatt for the purpose," said Kaushik Maitra, managing director of Sulekha Works that developed



• The solar-powered petrol pump.

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the technology.

The unique petrol pump would require no generator and would operate day and night. Besides, use of the non-conventional source of energy would efficiently address pollution concerns.

"The place where we set up the petrol pump has no electricity connection. Besides, such initiatives would be quite helpful in rural areas where there is either no electricity or the voltage is quite low. The expenses of maintenance of the pump is also reduced to a great extent," said Manas Routh Roy, retail manager of Indian Oil Siliguri

divisional office.

"The solar panels would generate electricity of up to 96 volts and 200 amperes. It would provide a backup power of up to two days. So even if the strength of sun rays is low for a few days, the petrol pump would continue functioning," Maitra said.

Maitra said the petrol pump has two LED lights running on solar energy in the evening. He plans to set up six more.

"The dealer would save recurring costs in maintenance of the gas station to the tune of ₹12,000 a month. Also, the petrol pump has a capacity of up to 12,000 litres a day," Maitra said.