German company scores \$9m solar pump order in Bangladesh

Raach Solar and its Power Utility Bangladesh Ltd local partner have landed two contracts to supply more than 700 pumps in the northwestern Bogra district, with the Asian Development Bank footing the bill.

OCTOBER 13, 2020 SYFUL ISLAM

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The government wants 50,000 solar pumps by 2050.

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German supplier Raach Solar and a Bangladeshi partner have secured two tenders worth a total \$9 million to install 705 solar-powered irrigation pumps in the north-western Bogra district of the South Asian nation.

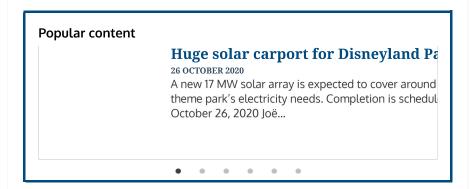
The program is being carried out by Raach with the Power Utility Bangladesh Ltd energy unit of the Dhaka-based, plastics-to-banking Bengal Group of Industries conglomerate. The pumps will be financed by an Asian Development Bank (ADB) grant under the development lender's power system efficiency improvement project.

The pumps were proposed by the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board and the contract awards ratified by the government's cabinet committee on procurement on Thursday.

Drain

The government plans to replace 1.34 million diesel irrigation pumps which consume around \$1 billion worth of imported fuel annually as well as using solar to displace 365,000 electric pumps which currently draw down almost 2 GW of grid power during summer. The nation's net-metering regime means solar-powered pumps can supply any surplus electricity generated to the grid and the national Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) recently published guidelines for the grid integration of solar irrigation pumps.

With Bangladesh already hosting 1,950 solar pumps, with a total generation capacity of almost 47 MW, state financier the Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) wants 50,000 systems by 2025, and had approved overseas development funding for 1,630 pumps up to October last year. Donor organizations have included the World Bank, German development lender KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau), the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and USAID, alongside the ADB.



SREDA chairman Mohammad Alauddin told pv magazine the reliance on

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2 von 5 29.10.2020, 13:37 added: "We are trying to develop a good business model for solar-run irrigation pumps to make it [the 50,000 ambition] feasible."

Dipal C Barua, president of the Bangladesh Solar and Renewable Energy Association trade body told **pv magazine** widening access to low-cost loans for such appliances, beyond sole subsidized credit provider IDCOL could speed adoption. "We suggest to engage more such organizations in this process," said Barua. "Most of the banks have a green financing window through which soft loans can be made available for entrepreneurs for [the] setting up of solar-run irrigation pumps."

Making such cheap finance available to smaller solar pump systems could also drive faster deployment, added the head of the industry body.

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