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Rahimafrooz Launches Solar-powered Irrigation System

Around 500,000 households are already enjoying the comfort solar home systems designed by Rahimafrooz

Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy Ltd (RRE) has introduced solar-powered irrigation system. The system will help save 760 megawatt (MW) power and 800 million litre of diesel every year if the conventional power- and diesel-run irrigation pumps are converted into solar power ones, said a press release. (FE Report)

Rahimafrooz has introduced the system through converting a 10HP diesel-run irrigation pump to solar power, which is owned by farmer Shaheen Ahmed of Kaishar Char under Savar in Dhaka district.

Last Saturday Niaz Rahim, Chairman of Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy Ltd, and Shaikh Siraj, media personality and presenter of Channel I's popular "Hridoye Mati O Manush" programme, formally launched the pump, which will supply water for irrigation of 20 acres of Boro rice field.

Dr Nazmul Hossain, Chairman of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) attended the launching ceremony. Senior advisor of German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) Khurshid-ul-Islam and Programme Coordinator of (GTZ) Erich Otto Gomm were present at the site.

It is the largest installation of its kind by Rahimafrooz in Bangladesh. It is a lifetime project with one single major investment as solar panels, the major part of the system is warranted for 20 years.

Rahimafrooz launched solar PV project back in 1985 in Bangladesh. Due to technological advancement, the solar market has grown fast and efficiently for the last few years.

Around 500,000 households are already enjoying the comfort solar home systems designed by Rahimafrooz, 70,000 of which are actually supplied and monitored by the company. Besides, another 100 kWp in medium- and large-scale solar installations are also supplied by Rahimafrooz.

The company introduced solar water pumping in 2004, pioneering the service in Bangladesh. Since then hundreds of beneficiaries are enjoying solar-based water pumping service for drinking and irrigation water.

During the Boro season, 120 million acre rice field in Bangladesh is irrigated by 1.33 million different types of water pumps, among which 87 % are diesel-operated, requiring 800 million liter diesel per year. The government provides taka 5,400 m cash subsidy on diesel-operated water pumps. Seasonal crisis and price volatility of diesel are common hazards that are associated with diesel pump-based irrigation in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) gave Rahimafrooz the opportunity to demonstrate a large solar-powered irrigation scheme for the Boro season.

As a proactive initiative to reduce solar solutions price, Rahimafrooz is also setting up a solar panel assembling plant.

The number of conventional pumps replaced by the solar pumps each year will save significant amount of fossil fuel consumption as well as the government subsidy on these, which will not recur for the next 20 years.