

## India's gas stations turn to solar energy

**India's state-owned fuel retailers are offering operators cheap loans to help them set up solar power units and reduce their operating costs.**

The new campaign spearheaded by India's government will see many petrol station owners install solar panels in order to reduce their dependence on gasoline generators which are expensive to run, reports the Economic Times.

Gas stations in rural areas where power supply is generally poor are the main target for the solar programme. State-run Indian Oil Corporation is offering owners loans of up to RS 5 lakh (\$7,845), with Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum set to endorse the renewable energy scheme.

Indian Oil's initial tests have revealed that running their 24,400 petrol station network on solar energy would be more profitable than the current system of burning diesel in generators when general power supply fails.

India has a total of 52,000 gas stations, many of them located in rural areas which would benefit from being power self-sufficient. It seems like India's fuel retailers will be turning green not on principal but for the financial advantages it presents to them.

Narendra Modi's government has proved to be ambitious when it comes to solar energy. Last June they announced a plan to increase the country's solar power generation capacity from the current 4 GW (gigawatt) to 100 GW by 2022. The plan is to be financed by attracting a \$100 billion foreign investment over the next 7 years. Modi has already been backed by a \$20 billion investment by Japan's SoftBank confirmed last June 22.