

Damodar Valley to replicate Gujarat's canal-top solar plant

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In a rare compliment from a UPA Minister for the BJP government in Gujarat, New and Renewable Energy Minister Farooq Abdullah on Monday said the solar power plant atop a water canal in the state has shown the nation the way and it will be replicated by Damodar Valley Corporation.

"Gujarat has shown the way" with the commissioning of the world's first 1 MW canal-top solar power plant in Mehsana district, he said during Question Hour in Rajya Sabha. The Gujarat project virtually eliminates the requirement to acquire vast tract of land and limits evaporation of water from the 750 meter long canal.

Abdullah said DVC has over 2000 km of canal network on which it wants to mount solar panels that can generated up to 1,000 MW electricity.

"States like Gujarat and Rajasthan have done commendable work in solar power," he said adding his ministry is eager to help states irrespective of which party was in power. His statement drew loud thumping of desks from Opposition benches with Ravi Shankar Prasad (BJP) congratulating the minister for speaking frankly about the contribution made by states. "We want to help state governments. We don't discriminateHum sab Hindustani hai...Hindustan bachega to hum bachenge (We all are Indians, if India survives, then only we will survive)," he said, adding, "We want to strengthen the nation."

Abdullah also lauded Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for the vast network of renewable energy sources including solar and wind power set up in the state.

He said over 979 MW of solar power capacity has been set up in the country, of which 654.8 MW is in Gujarat, 197.5 MW in Rajasthan and 20 MW in Maharashtra. The tariff has come down from Rs 18 per unit to about Rs 7 a unit, he said adding it will further come down when the second phase of projects come up.