

INDIAN SOLAR FIRMS CHEER IMPORTS FROM MARKET ECONOMIES

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Business Standard reported that solar power project developers' threat to import solar cells from countries such as Japan, Korea, Singapore and others is music to the ears of Indian solar cell manufacturers.

The manufacturers are of the view that it's better to compete with these countries than 'non-market' economies like China.

A senior executive of a Delhi based leading solar cell manufacturer said that "We have been saying the same thing over the past two years that anti-dumping duty would not have any adverse effect over the solar programme of the country."

He said that "With the developers choosing countries such as the European Union, Korea, Japan and Canada, it would be a competitive market. We at least won't have to compete with non market economies such as China."

Power project developers had earlier said that if a dumping duty is imposed on cheaper imports, the solar power cost would go up and the government's aim to bring down solar power price would fail.

Last month, India slapped dumping duty on solar gear imported in the country from the US, China, Malaysia and Taiwan, in order to safeguard the domestic manufacturing of the same. The Directorate General of Anti Dumping, in its final findings, recommended anti dumping duties of up to USD 0.48 per watt on solar cells coming from the US and 0.81 per watt on Chinese.

The ministry of new and renewable energy and project developers are apprehensive that this would double up the cost of solar power generation. The developers wrote to the government that they would still depend on imports, though from another set of countries.

The domestic manufacturers are of the view that the cost of solar power would remain at INR 7.5 per unit by 2020 if indigenous solar cells are used. The current cost of solar power in the country is the INR 6.5 to INR 8 per unit.

The industry is also hopeful of scaling their current capacity by 300 Mw from current 1,260 MW, by the year end.

Mr Ajay Goel, CEO of TATA Power Solar, said that "Dumping duty leads to 20% increase in the cost of solar cells, this in turn translates into a 10% increase in the cost of power project. This also over the period of the project will fall to 8%. It's better than the country wasting INR 11,000 crore of foreign exchange in importing solar cells."