

CESL plans solar charging ports for EVs through aggregation

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WITH A SUSTAINED growth in interest for electric vehicles (EVs), state-run Convergence Energy Services (CESL) is looking to gather interest from parties for having a web of solar charging stations for EVs across the country.

Unlike a regular EV charging station, solar charging stations make use of large batteries that store the electricity generated by the sun before transmitting it to the vehicle plugged in for charging. Photo-voltaic modules, better known as solar panels, are used in harnessing the sun's heat and converting it into electricity.

Market watchers say that since most of the power generated in India comes from non-renewable energy sources such as coal, solar charging for zero polluting vehicles like electric, will be the ideal solution for



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making them truly zero emission, fully green vehicles.

Vishal Kapoor, CEO, CESL, said: "CESL has moved from an investment model to a model where we do demand aggregation as a service. We are looking at the economics of this plan to know its feasibility. It is very much on the table and we are doing the evaluation." In October last year, CESL established a first-of-its-kind solar charging plaza for EVs in the Ladakh

region. The carport constituted 100 kW solar PV panels with an 860 kW/hour lithium ion battery storage system. The power generated during the daylight hours can be stored for about 8 hours, allowing vehicles to charge anytime.

The government delicensed EV charging stations, paving the way for any individual or entity to invest in this field. Typically, a fast-charging station's estimated cost is around ₹16.5 lakh

to ₹40 lakh, including equipment, land and power.

The cost of setting up a solar carport is estimated to go up to a maximum of ₹3-4 crore due to the involvement of solar panels, lithium ion batteries, and comparatively larger real estate. CESL believes that it is important to make it commercially viable to attract private parties.

Tata Power, India's largest integrated power company, has already set up multiple EV charging renewable energy stations across Mumbai, including those powered by solar energy.

"Solar is the cheapest source of energy. It is the cost of converting the energy into electricity which makes it economically challenging. But PV modules are increasingly being made in India which should bring down the cost further," a Mumbai-based analyst said. CESL took the charge for aggregating demand for electric buses, electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers.