

India aims for Asia's biggest tidal power plant

January 19 2011, by Rajesh Joshi



A girl looks at an exhibition at the 'Energy Expo 2009' in Ahmedabad in India in October 2009. The western Indian state of Gujarat is aiming to host the first commercial-scale tidal power project in Asia after signing a deal with a British marine energy company, officials said Wednesday.

The western Indian state of Gujarat is aiming to host the first commercial-scale tidal power project in Asia after signing a deal with a British marine energy company, officials said Wednesday.

State Energy Minister Saurabh Patel told AFP that two or three locations had been identified in the Gulf of Kutch where turbines from London-based Atlantis Resources Corporation could be set up.

A preliminary agreement was signed last week between the government and Atlantis which foresees the start of construction later this year, with

initial capacity of 50 [megawatts](#) (MW) and long-term capacity of up to 250 MW.

Patel said environmental and commercial factors would be taken into consideration, as well as highly sensitive territorial claims in the area where the sea is divided between India and Pakistan.

"We have to take into consideration that the local fishermen are not affected, that there is no harm to the environment and that traffic at the ports in the Gulf region is not affected," he said.

The company said the project would "require hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in [tidal turbines](#)," adding that its studies of the waters around Gujarat showed that tides there were strong enough to generate 300MW of power.

Highly industrialised Gujarat, one of the best performing states in the country economically, has installed electricity capacity of more than 11,000 MW at present, meaning [tidal power](#) would meet only a fraction of total demand.

D.J. Pandian, chairman of the state-run Gujarat Power Corporation, said in a statement released after the deal was signed that the project "will be India's and indeed Asia's first at commercial scale."

To become the first in Asia, the project will need to be completed before South Korea's 254 MW Sihwa Lake tidal power project.

The Korean facility was on track to become the world's largest in 2009, but it has since been hit by repeated delays that mean it is still unfinished.

The Gujarat project is the latest in a series of steps taken by India, the

world's third-largest producer of electricity using fossil fuels, to meet its energy needs using renewable sources.

Last year, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh launched the National Solar Mission, saying it could "establish India as a global leader in solar energy" in the areas of power generation and technology production.

India's energy infrastructure is unable to match demand for electricity, with government figures showing approximately 80,000 impoverished Indian villages with no access to the power grid.

Currently, the country produces more than 15,000MW of power from all renewable sources, according to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, with 10,000MW from wind energy alone.

Tidal power has yet to become a popular source of [energy](#), due to the high costs involved in setting up plants, and the limited availability of sites with high enough tidal ranges.

The biggest tidal power station in the world is located at La Rance, Brittany, France, where 240MW is generated, sufficient to meet 90 per cent of Brittany's electricity demands.

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