Solar power netherlands

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In the Dutch countryside, about 130 km east of Amsterdam, an unusual-looking hill towers and glistens above farmhouses, leafless trees, and muddy grassland.

The hill - 25 metres tall - is built from 15 years" worth of household and business waste. What"s remarkable is what"s covering it: 23,000 solar panels.

Dutch solar developer TPSolar opened the array, which can produce up to 8.9 megawatts of power, in Armhoede, in the east of the Netherlands, in mid-2020. The former landfill now generates enough electricity for about 2,500 households.

The project reflects a wider drive in the Netherlands - which now has more than 48 million solar panels installed - to find innovative places to put new renewable energy capacity.

The Netherlands today has an average of two solar panels per inhabitant - and installed capacity of more than 1 kilowatt (KW) per person - making it Europe"s per-capita solar powerhouse, according to industry association Solar Power Europe.

With land for renewables short nearly everywhere in the world, the Dutch experience - including putting solar on car parks, commercial lakes, sheep grazing fields, strawberry farms, disused churches, train stations and airfields - could inspire better placing of renewables globally.

"Because we have so little space in the Netherlands, it"s important to use the ground for multiple reasons," said Bernd Nijen Twilhaar, a coordinator at Dutch solar developer Solarfields, which manages large solar farms and has installed at least 450,000 panels in the country.

"We have to be innovative and creative so we can produce the electricity the Netherlands needs to go green," he added.

Solar developers and analysts say the Dutch expansion has been driven by a huge drop in equipment prices, an effective energy subsidy scheme, and ambitious government targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Dutch government aims to make 70 per cent of its electricity renewable by 2030, mainly through expanding solar and wind power capacity as it seeks to cut its emissions. It currently stands as one of Europe"s top six polluting countries.

Like many EU nations, the Netherlands is cutting energy reliance on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.

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Dutch solar and wind farms have helped fill the electricity supply gap left by gas-fired power stations that have become unprofitable amidst record high gas prices.

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