

Farooq Adullah lays stress on solar power

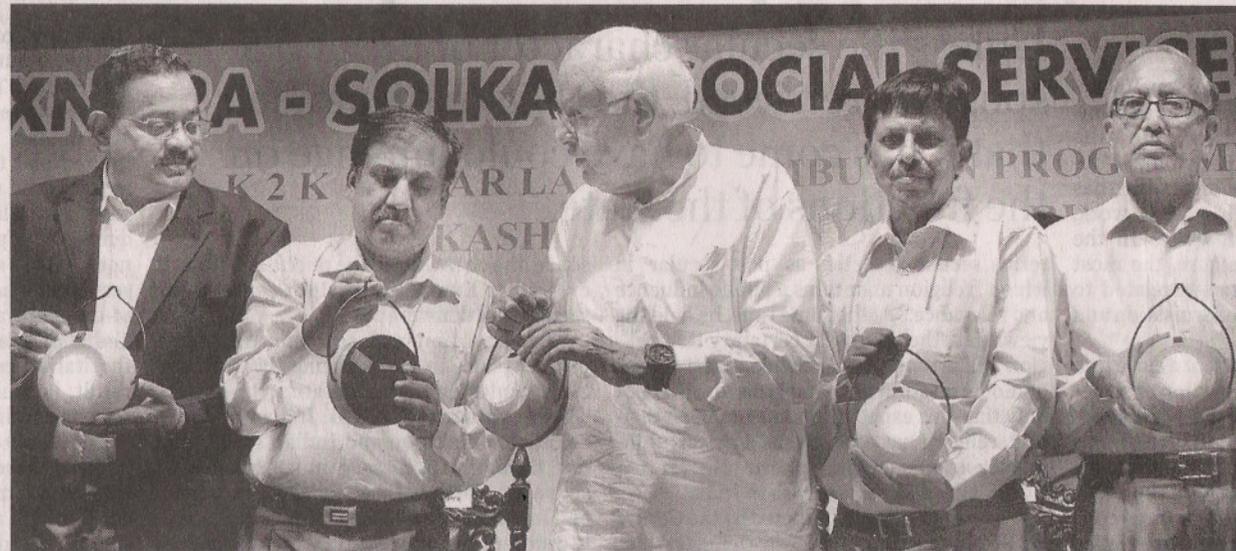
Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: If the Centre diverts a part of the subsidy for fuels to create renewable energy sources, there will be a tremendous change in the lives of people, said Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Farooq Abdullah here on Monday.

Addressing a function organised by Exnora and Solkar for distributing solar lamps to the underprivileged, Dr. Abdullah said that his "ministry wants to change the image of India and tell the world it is no longer depending on fuels, because God has given it solar power."

Recalling the experience of a friend, who had successfully reduced electricity bills by 55 per cent after installing solar plants in 10 of the 15 hotels owned by him, the Minister said that bringing down the cost of solar energy equipment would make them accessible to more and more people.

Dr. Abdullah said that his Ministry also had plans to convert pilgrim centres such as Tirupati, Shirdi and Vaishnodevi temple, which had re-



GREEN ALTERNATIVE: Farooq Abdullah, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, at the 'K2K' solar lamp distribution programme organised by Exnora and Solkar in Chennai on Monday. M.B. Nirmal, founder, Exnora (second from right) and N. Murali, Managing Director, The Hindu (right), are in the picture. — PHOTO: V. GANESAN

newable energy sources, into green towns and villages.

He cautioned against free distribution of solar lights saying people would lose faith in these products if there was no maintenance cost. "Collect some amount. Free distribu-

tion carries no respect."

Union Secretary of New and Renewable Energy Deepak Gupta said 500 villages had been covered by solar energy and 10,000 more would benefit during the current Plan.

Managing Director of The

Hindu N. Murali said that solar energy would bring light to the lives of people for whom electricity was still a distant dream. When global warming had emerged as a major environmental issue, solar energy would be a boon for clean and

green environment.

Exnora founder M.B. Nirmal explained the objectives of the 'Sunlite a Home' project. K.E. Ragnathan, managing director of Solkar Solar, said in the first phase 1000 solar lights would be distributed