



Ravi Pittie's Agni Solar is the first solar company to build a brand nationally.

Pressurized solar heating system installed in a company in Pune.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY AGNI SOLAR



Solar lantern

Sunshine Days Ahead

Pune is in contention with closest rival Bangalore for the title of 'Sun City' thanks to its efforts in pioneering the use of solar energy for heating and lighting purposes. And manufacturers of equipment are confident that legislation making solar heaters compulsory in new buildings is in the offing.

With increasing power shortages and rising cost of electricity, not to mention the pollution caused by huge thermal power plants, solar energy, especially in a tropical country like ours is being looked upon as an alternative source of energy. What's more – solar energy is also a clean and non-polluting source of power.

In India, Pune has been at the forefront in developing technology to harness solar energy. When it comes to utility, the sun's energy can be harnessed in two ways – either for heating or for lighting. Today technology is available to heat water up to a maximum of 80 degrees centigrade, which is, by any yardstick, piping

hot. This is by using flat plate solar collectors.

As the name suggests, these collectors are flat and made of an aluminium body with a toughened glass sheet on top, through which the sun's rays can pass. Below the glass sheet is a copper absorber plate, which is coated with a high performance black paint. As is common knowledge, a black surface absorbs the sun's heat and below these copper plates are tubes in which there is water running within it. The heat absorbed by the copper plate is passed on to the water in the tubes, which gets heated and in case of a simple solar water heater the hot water rises naturally and is replaced by cold water