

Paragon Agro generates its own electricity from waste

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Paragon Agro Ltd, a leading agro-based company, has started producing electricity from poultry waste.

The firm that mainly does business in poultry, tea and horticulture, set up three plants to generate a total 475 kilowatts (KW) of electricity a year.

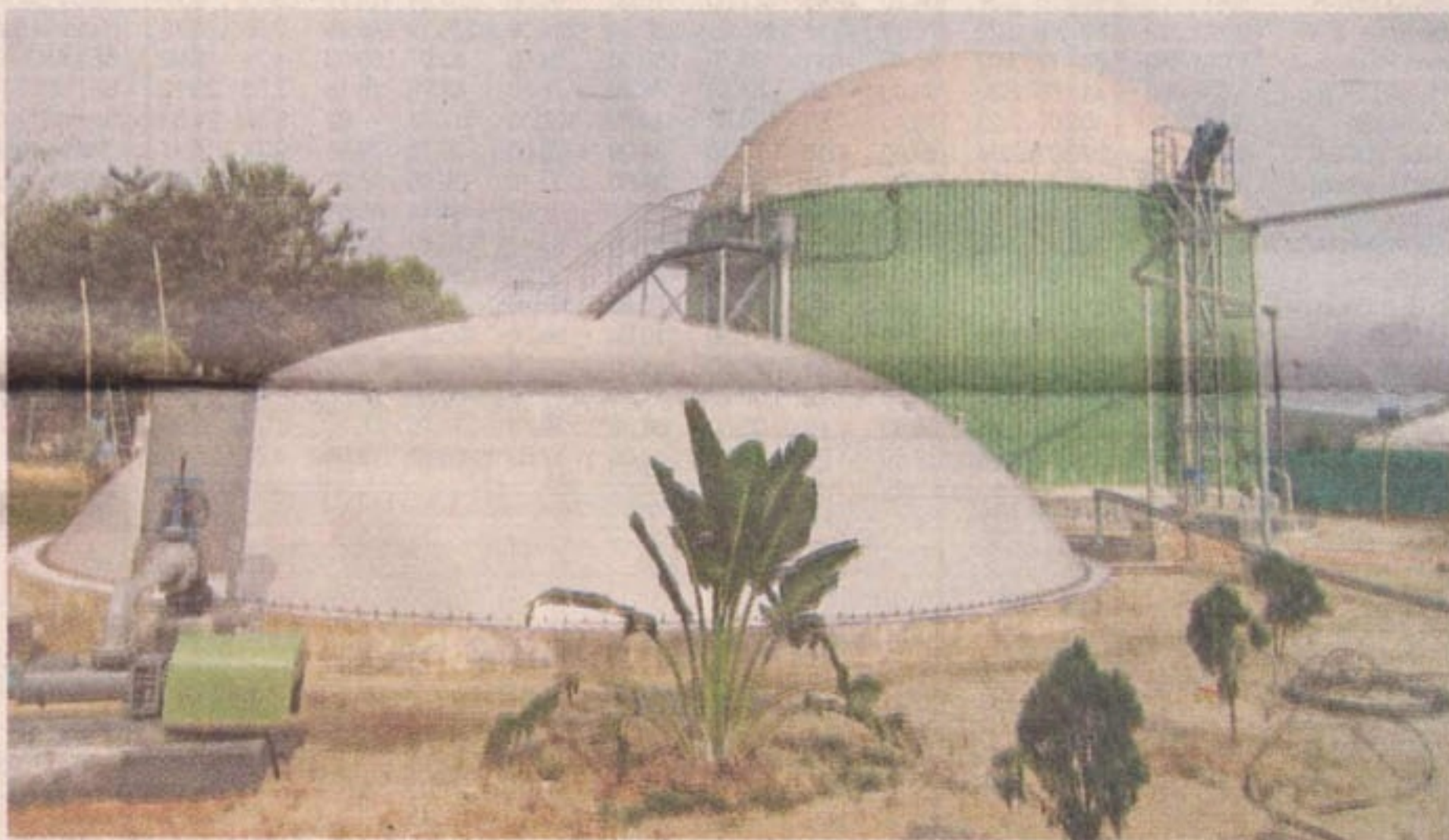
"We are no longer dependent on the national grid to meet our power demand in the poultry farms," said Moshiur Rahman, managing director of Paragon Agro Ltd, a concern of Paragon Group.

"These plants supply power to the chicken houses, while captured heat is used to produce hot water in the hot water tanks to maintain an effective temperature in the digesters."

As a result, the company does not need to pay any electricity bills to run its poultry business, he added.

Paragon is one of the few large poultry farms that ventured into clean energy research and action at a time when unplanned disposal of poultry waste from tens of thousands of farms is causing soil and water pollution.

The poultry industry produces around



PARAGON

A plant of Paragon Agro Ltd that produces power from poultry waste.

7,500 tonnes of waste a day, which can be used to generate up to 50 megawatt of electricity, according to stakeholders.

The project utilises poultry waste supplied by Paragon Poultry Ltd. It uses the waste as input for the biogas digesters to produce gas,

which after purification is supplied to run gas generators.

Paragon started its first bio-electricity plant with a capacity of 50 KW in Gazipur in March last year.

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The other two plants went into operation in October in Gazipur and Mymensingh.

The Gazipur plant has a capacity to generate 300 KW of electricity and the Mymensingh one has a capacity of 125 KW.

The company will also make organic fertilisers using the slurry produced as a by-product in the biogas digesters.

The three plants have the capacity to produce up to 25,000 tonnes of organic fertiliser a year, said Rahman. He said the project helps them manage the waste properly. "It will also reduce the risk of diseases."

Paragon said it has used Chinese and European technologies to set up the biogas plants.

The company set up the plants with a total investment of Tk 15 crore. Of the total fund,

Paragon Agro financed Tk 5 crore and borrowed Tk 10 crore from BRAC Bank to establish the plants, Rahman said.

Also the managing director of Paragon Group, Rahman said the electricity to be generated from the biogas plants will be supplied to adjacent poultry farms of Paragon Poultry Ltd at Tk 4 per kilowatt-hour.

He however said the biogas plants would not make the venture cost-effective.

"Power generation through the biogas plants will be costlier. We plan to benefit through cost-recovery from selling the fertiliser," he said.

Paragon has fixed the price of organic fertiliser at Tk 15 per one-kilogramme packet, while the price of bulk fertiliser will be lower.

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