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MUMBAI: India should take global economic downturn as an excellent opportunity to improve its energy supplies by retooling its economy to run on renewable energy using young engineers and scientists, says an agriculturist and alternate energy expert.

“The increasing number of qualified engineers and scientists remaining in India, or returning from the United States (following President Obama's new budget policies), should be given an opportunity in the renewable energy sector. This will create not only energy supplies for India but millions of jobs and raise people's standard of living,” says Mr Anil K Rajvanshi, director, Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), Phaltan, Maharashtra.

“The global economic downturn provides an excellent opportunity to improve India's energy supplies, which are critical to supporting better infrastructure and driving growth,” Mr Rajvanshi, who has developed several alternate energy technologies said.

India predicts that it will need an extra 75,000 MW of electricity-generating capacity by 2012. The country produces around 600 million tonnes of agricultural residue each year and “if only half of this was available for use in biomass-based power plants, it would still produce 40,000 MW of energy,” Mr Rajvanshi said. – PTI

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