

(c) whether it is a fact that these projects are likely to safeguard the environment (friendly) and cheaper than the thermal power plants; and

(d) if so, the States where Government have taken concrete steps to start these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE, MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAWAHAR WANTI MEHTA): (a) The energy availability during the period April, 2000 to June, 2000 was 114674 MU against a requirement of 124059 thus shortage of 9385 MU (7.6%),

(b) Small Hydro Projects located on small rivers/streams are generally considered very useful for meeting the power requirement of far-flung and remote areas not connected by the grid.

(c) Small hydro projects are environment friendly but are not envisaged for flood control. As these projects are located generally in remote hills terrain, the cost of installation per MW is generally higher than medium and major hydro projects and also thermal projects,

(d) Small hydro power projects have the potential of meeting power requirements in an economical manner in remote and isolated areas. These projects also have the advantage of short gestation periods. Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources is promoting development of small hydro power (SHP) projects in the entire country and provides various financial incentives for the development of these projects which include support for detailed survey and investigation, detailed project report preparation, capital subsidy to the State for projects, interest subsidy to commercial projects and financial support for the renovation and modernization of old SHP projects.

Amendments in Electricity Acts to Discourage Power Theft

1203. DR. PASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state

(a) the provisions in the Electricity Acts to prevent power thefts;

(b) whether the punishment is sufficient to act as deterrent; and

(c) if not, what amendments Government propose to make in this

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regard with mandatory imprisonment of at least six months to discourage newer d u s t s going on unabated by the industrialists as well as slum dwellers throughout the country.'

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) to (e) The theft of energy is covered under section 39 of the Indian electricity Act, 1910. Under this provision, whoever: dishonestly extracts/consumes or uses any energy shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years or with fine which shall not be less than Rs. 1000/- or with both. Further under section 39A, whosoever attempts to commit or abets an offence punishable under Section 39 shall, notwithstanding anything contained in Section 116 of Indian Penal code, be punished with penalty provided for the offence.

(b) Suggestions have been received for making the provisions relating to theft more stringent. The draft of the new Electricity Bill received from the NCAER, the consultant engaged for this purpose, has more stringent provisions.

NEW Guarantee Scheme for Power Projects

1204 SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to State.

(a) the details of the new guarantee scheme for power projects announced by the Prime Minister in Lisbon, on 28th June, 2000; and

(b) the response received, if any from the European countries for bidding in or power generation or transmission companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) and (b) The Prime Minister, in his speech delivered at the India-European Union Business Summit at Lisbon, Portugal on June 27, 2000 announced that the Government is willing to consider a new guarantee structure for large transmission project and power purchase systems as well as accelerating the international competitive bidding (ICB) process for renovation and modernisation of the country's power generating companies. It is still too early to expect a response.