

very much due to rainfall, heavy winds and other natural calamities. I would like to know whether this system can be adopted in various districts there, and whether the Ministry has taken steps to give advance information regarding humidity, cloud, temperature, wind, rainfall, etc. in our State for the benefit of the farmers and other people there because there have been loss of lives, crops and even lands. So, I would like to know whether any steps have been taken to provide these services in our State so that our people can get the benefit.

SHRI VILASRAO DESHMUKH: Sir, this IM Department is already having their own automatic weather stations and we also have automatic rain gauges, but the hon. Member has asked something to be done in his own State because we have to expand this service and for that, we are definitely planning to expand this to all the states and steps will be taken by that Department.

SHRI S. THANGAVELU: Sir, the IBM had earlier refused any connection with the Agromet service. Which company has the Ministry engaged to provide Agromet services?

SHRI VILASRAO DESHMUKH: Sir, there are various companies coming forward, like IFFCO, which is also doing this service. Then, there are other companies like the Tata Consultancy Services. There are various companies which are coming forward and we are providing them with the required information.

Withdrawal of additional power from the grid

*345. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission has warned the companies of penal action for over-drawing electricity from the grid and also directed the utilities to purchase power from short term open markets and has prohibited overdrawal from the grid;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Supreme Court has also stated that the overdrawal of power by industries is an unauthorized use of electricity; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At present the Grid Code specifies a permissible frequency band of 49.5 to 50.2 Hz for safe and smooth operation of the grid. The Regional Load Despatch Centres (RLDCs) monitor the overdrawal from the grid and report violations to

Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC). The Central Commission initiates proceedings under Section 142 of the Electricity Act, 2003 for non-compliance of the Grid Code or appoints one of its Members as Adjudicating Officer under Section 143 of the Act for holding inquiry into the allegation of non-compliance of the directions of RLDCs.

In the past, the Central Commission and also the Adjudicating officers have imposed penalties on many State utilities for non-compliance of the provisions of the Grid Code due to overdrawal from the grid. The Commission and the Adjudicating Officers appointed by the Commission in their orders have time and again emphasized that the utilities should meet their requirement of power through long-term, medium term and short term contracts and not by overdrawal from the grid as it affects stability.

Recently, on the basis of the report of Northern Regional Load Despatch Centre (NRLDC) regarding overdrawal from 23.9.2011 to 6.10.2011, the Commission in Petition No. 195/MP/2011 has passed orders against the constituents of Northern Region for non-compliance of the provisions of the Grid Code and issued directions to the constituents of the Northern Region not to overdraw and to ensure smooth operation of the grid.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Civil Appeal No. 8859/2011—Executive Engineer and Anr. Vs. Sri Seetaram Rice Mill [(2012) 2 SCC 108] has interpreted the overdrawal of power by a consumer over and above its sanctioned load as unauthorized use of electricity in context of Section 126 of the Electricity Act, 2003.

SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Sir, I would like to know whether the Government has invoked special powers under the Electricity Act and directed the Central and State regulators to implement a long-pending reform to allow industrial consumers to buy cheaper power from the open market.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Sir, open access system has been one of the key provisions of the Electricity Act 2003. The main objective of open access system is to enable consumers, having a requirement of more than one megawatt, to source power from competitive sources. The provision was introduced to benefit bulk consumers, especially in the industrial sectors, to access cheap and reliable electricity for their uses. But, for some reasons, it has been delayed due to lack of clarity in some provisions of the Electricity Act. After all, we from the Power Ministry referred the matter to the Law Department, and finally, we have received comments from the Law Department. On that basis, Power Ministry has directed CERC to take all necessary steps for introducing the system.

SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Sir, I would like to know whether this move will help a large number of consumers, particularly the sick textile, cement and steel industrial

units, in States like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Gujarat, by ensuring regular supply of electricity at competitive rates. Has the Ministry issued letters to regulators to prepare regulations in this connection?

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Definitely. We have already written to the regulators in this regard. Then, definitely, it will benefit the consumers, especially the industrial sectors and those who are in sick areas.

DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Sir, the question is whether the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission has warned the companies of penal action for over-drawing electricity from the grid. I would like to get a clarification from the hon. Minister. How many cases are reported for violation of overdrawing and what are the penalties imposed? What are the consequences of over-drawing by depriving other consumers?

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Definitely, we have a list. A long list of about 23 cases has already been reported by the CERC. Some decisions have been stayed by the respective Hon. High Courts. The over-drawal of power is affecting the consumers and the utilities in a bigger way. But we have to maintain some discipline with the grid because our power grid is one of the largest power grids in the world itself. Therefore, we have to regularise on certain norms and decisions. Some States are over-drawing because of problems. We know that some States are suffering acute power shortage. That is why they are over-drawing, but, from nation-side we have to regulate this.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Sir, in the sentence of Paragraph 4 of Part (b) of the reply, the Hon. Minister has mentioned that the Northern Zone has merely been asked not to overdraw the power, but does not really stipulate whether any penal action, as desired, has been stipulated. The more basic issue which I wish to ask really from the Hon. Minister is that the non-adherence of grid discipline is due to inequilibrium between demand and supply which could be of a transient nature. Some grids are more prone and vulnerable than other grids. Does the hon. Minister have any account or which are the grids really proved themselves most vulnerable in terms of violating the grid discipline.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Sir, I totally agree with the views expressed by the learned Hon. Member. Some regions have a severe power shortage and some regions are in some sort of comfortable position. Due to this, some regions are forced to indulge in this. But, we are not in a position to allow that.

As far as the Northern Region is concerned, even though there is a lot of power crisis, it is over-drawing the power. The Regional Dispatch Centre requested the CERC for taking action. That is why CERC is taking action against the Northern Grid. I agree that there is a disparity between demand and availability of power. But, as far as the Government of India is concerned, the 11th Plan has been a major achievement Plan period for the Ministry of Power. We have added a capacity of

54,966 MW in the country. Sir, in the last financial year alone, we have added 20,522 MW of capacity addition. As per the latest Economic Survey, the power sector has achieved a growth rate of 9.3 per cent which is largest in the infrastructure sector.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Mr. Minister, your target was 78,000 MW. You tell about your target also. You set a target of 78,000 MW. But, you have been able to achieve only 54,000 MW.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Hon. Minister, I would be grateful if the hon. Cabinet Minister replies to my supplementary. It relates to Paragraph 4 of the reply. There is insistence that long-term contracts must be encouraged so that there is no overdrawal of power. Sir, a large number of State Governments are giving directions under Section 11 of the Electricity Act to supply them power, in view of certain impending emergent situations, which is not permissible and is impacting upon the long-term contracts. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how does the Government propose to solve this situation *i.e.*, overdrawal from the grid and the long-term contracts are not dislocated.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL: Sir, I have already said this in reply to earlier supplementaries that there is over-drawl in the country. There are a lot of cases reported and CERC and the concerned Regional Dispatch Centre is taking action against them. We, the Government of India, are regulating the matter. There are problems. Sir, particularly Tamil Nadu has taken this issue before the Madras High Court and the Madras High Court has already stayed one of the regulations made by the CERC. We, from the Government of India's side, are trying to help the State Governments and also maintain discipline in the grid. It will benefit the entire nation.

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE: Sir, hon. Member has asked his supplementary specifically on Section 11. Sir, four months ago, I had invited all the Power Ministers of the country and brought it to their notice that Section 11 is applicable only in emergency. Some of the States have applied Section 11. We have brought it to their notice that they cannot apply Section 11.

Uniform procurement policy

*346. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any uniform policy followed for procurement of foodgrains by Government agencies all over the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether, in some States, the millers are procuring more foodgrains as compared to Government agencies;