

As per the “Report on Performance of State Power Utilities” published by PFC, the billing and collection efficiency for FY 2013-14 at national level was 79.4% and 97.35% respectively.

(b) Non-payment of bills by consumers on regular basis is one of the reasons for increasing losses to the power distribution companies. The measures taken by the Union Government to tackle this problem, *inter-alia*, include facilitating Distribution Utilities to strengthen sub-transmission and distribution network, to meter distribution transformers/feeders/consumers, to make the distribution system IT enabled, to install smart meters and pre-paid meters etc.

Improvement of health of river Ganga

*138. PROF. M.V. RAJEEV GOWDA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is undertaking any programmes to improve the health of river Ganga and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether the Ministry has formulated a plan for the management of corpses in the river and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (SUSHRI UMA BHARATI): (a) Yes Sir. The Ministry has undertaken several initiatives to improve the health of the river Ganga under the ‘Namami Gange’ Program. The main focus is on two concept *i.e.*, “Aviral Dhara” and “Nirmal Dhara” *i.e.* to ensure sufficient flow in river and at the same time arrest pollution entering into Ganga river. The following activities are proposed under ‘Namami Gange’ program: re-habilitation and up-gradation of existing Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs); Interception and Diversion of drains falling into the river through 5 basin States (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal), creation of additional sewage and other effluent treatment capacity. These are targeted towards improving the health of river. Further, other interventions such as development of model dhobi ghats, creation of model ghats, public amenities in places of tourist importance on the banks of the river, afforestation drive for medicinal plants and native tree species and conservation of diversity of Gangetic aquatic life are also under various stages of implementation to improve the health of river. For afforestation drive, Forest Research Institute has been engaged to prepare a DPR considering the importance of afforestation all along the Ganga banks as a bio-filter to reduce pollution, arrest silt load in river and facilitate in enhancing the ground water recharge and sub-surface flow to river which will ensure a minimum flow in river. All

these activities once implemented will facilitate creating better health of river Ganga and improve its aquatic life.

(b) National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is facilitating the State Governments in construction of eco-friendly crematoria as part of the Namami Gange programme. These include provision of Improved Wood Based Crematorium (IWC) for minimizing wood requirement.

Funds spent on Polavaram Project Authority

*139. SHRI PALVAI GOVARDHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) the funds spent on the Polavaram Project Authority for Polavaram Dam during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Authority has not put in place a transparent system of contracting and releasing of fund.

(c) what steps would be taken to have an immediate CAG audit of all expenditure incurred for the Dam and amounts claimed for reimbursement; and

(d) the steps proposed to withhold payments till CAG submits a report on this?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (SUSHRI UMA BHARATI): (a) and (b) The Polavaram Project Authority has come into existence since January 2015. As such it has not completed even one year. No contract has been awarded by the Polavaram Project Authority. The existing contracts are being handled by the State Government directly and as of now the expenditure incurred by the State Government under these contracts is being reimbursed by the Polavaram Project Authority. The Authority is not directly associated with the contract management of the existing contracts as of now.

(c) The CAG audit for the works being executed by the State Government is carried out as per the programme of the auditing office. While reimbursing the expenditure incurred by the State Government on the works the audited statements are asked for by the Authority as one of the requirements in addition to other.

(d) There is no proposal to withhold the payment as the audit of the expenditures under the project is undertaken as per procedure and the audit observations are attended to by the State Government who are incurring the expenditure.