

**Purchase of energy from solar power plants**

1515. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether many State Governments have signed agreements/contracts with many industrial houses to purchase energy from solar power plants in various parts of the country without competitive bidding;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the cost of power purchase agreements;
- (c) whether recent bids for solar projects under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission attracted bids as low as 7 per unit and if so, details thereof; and
- (d) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to purchase energy from solar power plants at lower cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTER OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Under Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM), the latest invited tariff-based bid for solar power by MNRE was in August 2011, wherein the least tariff selected was ₹ 7.49 per unit. Thereafter MNRE had invited bids wherein a fixed tariff of ₹ 5.45 per unit was offered and the bidding was for the amount of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) required. However, in the latest bids invited by Madhya Pradesh for setting up of 300 MW solar power, the least tariff selected is ₹ 5.05 per unit.

(d) The Government of India has taken following steps to purchase energy from solar power at lower cost:

- A. Inviting competitive bidding including International Competitive Bidding (ICB) and reverse auction to ensure lowest possible tariffs.
- B. Reducing the cost of financing by way of following :
  - Award of Priority Sector status to Renewable Energy Sector for lending upto certain limit.
  - Roof-top Solar PV systems have been made eligible for home loans.
  - Issuance of tax free green bonds of ₹ 5,000 crore.
  - Long term Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) to ensure low cost financing.

- Waiver of wheeling charges on Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS).
- Fiscal incentives like custom duty concessions, excise duty exemptions, 10 year income tax holiday and incentives from States like stamp duty waiver, reduced/nil wheeling charges, etc. to enable solar power developers to offer lower tariffs.

#### **Devolution of powers to panchayats**

1516. SHRI SANJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has increased its efforts to promote devolution of powers from States to Panchayats and if so, the details in this regard; and
- (b) how far Panchayats in Maharashtra have been benefited by these measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI NIHAL CHAND): (a) and (b) As per the Constitutional provisions State Governments are charged with the responsibility of devolution of powers to the Panchayats. The Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA) supports State Governments to strengthen their Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), thereby improving functional devolution. A National Workshop on Own Sources of Revenue (OSR) of Panchayats was held by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) to promote increased financial devolution to Gram Panchayats to raise their own revenue through tax and non tax measures. MoPR also annually assess the extent of devolution of powers and authority to PRIs by States through an independent study, which ranks States on a Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI). The study for 2014-15 was conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). Maharashtra ranked 4th among States on overall PDI and was appreciated with 'citation' conferred by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 24th April, 2015, the National Panchayati Raj Day.

#### **Revival of State of Panchayats report**

1517. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is proposed to revive the biennial State of Panchayats report;
- (b) if so, whether Government itself would prepare the report and if not, the institution to which this would be entrusted;