

be done immediately. There is a single rate of taxation in several countries, but these are those countries which don't have people who live below the poverty line. India has such large disparities and people use different commodities. For instance, food items in India would always be either zero rated, or rated at the lowest slab of five per cent. At the same time, there would be luxury items which can't be put in the same slab as food. So, the question of having one slab-rate itself doesn't arise. Already the process of rationalization has begun and, if the hon. Member notes, we have the 28 per cent slab in which the standard items were put, those which were earlier in the standard rate of Central Excise and the VAT itself. Now, most of those items have already been brought down to the 18 per cent slab-rate. So, that process of rationalization has begun. That is ongoing exercise, which I am quite certain would continue.

Policy support and lowering of tariffs for renewable energy generation

*152. SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian renewable energy companies are among the most poorly rated investment grade companies in the Asia Pacific region;

(b) whether it is also a fact that for renewable energy to make up a larger portion of India's electricity generation, bolstered by untapped generation potential, it needs strong policy support and lower tariffs;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the renewable energy made up 58 per cent- its biggest share yet-of the 25 GW of generation capacity added in India in Financial Year 2017; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI RAJ KUMAR SINGH): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) In a news item that appeared in 'The Hindu' newspaper on 20 November, 2017, it was reported that as per Fitch's 2018 Outlook on Asia-Pacific Utilities the Indian renewable energy companies are among the poorly rated investment grade companies in the Asia-Pacific region. However, the observations contained in Fitch Outlook 2018 are

not backed by detailed analysis and hence cannot be considered as representative of the Indian renewable energy companies. Ernst and Young in its Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (RECAI) report of October 2017 has ranked India as second on RECAI.

The share of renewable energy is progressively increasing in the Indian electricity mix. In the year 2015-16, with 65.78 billion units the share of renewables was 5.61 per cent. This increased to 6.59 per cent in the year 2016-17. In growth terms with 82 billion units, the renewable generation in 2016-17 was around 25 per cent higher than the previous year. This growth is attributed to Government of India's proactive policy measures that include various fiscal and financial incentives for increasing share of renewable energy in the country's electricity mix. As per the Central Electricity Authority, in the year 2016-17, the share of renewable energy in the total electric power generation capacity addition was 52.2 per cent.

SHRI A.K. SELVARAJ: Hon. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated in his reply that the rating, as per Fitch's 2018 Outlook on Asia-Pacific Utilities of Indian renewable energy companies was not backed by detailed analysis and hence, cannot be considered, while Ernst and Young has ranked India as second on Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (RECAI) in October, 2017. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has examined the Report of Ernst and Young and, if so, whether the same is backed by a fairly detailed analysis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has to be brief and the answer has to be reasonably brief.

SHRI RAJ KUMAR SINGH: Sir, in the reply it has been made clear that the Report of Fitch does not appear to be founded on facts. They have cited three companies for having come to the conclusion that green companies or the renewable energy companies in India are weak. Now, all the three companies which have been cited have nothing to do with renewable energy. The National Thermal Power Corporation is primarily a thermal power generating company and it is one of the best companies in the world. Its net worth is ₹ 96,000 crore and the profit of the NTPC last year was about ₹ 12,300 crore. So, the fact is that NTPC is not a renewal energy company and, in any case, it is not a weak company. They have rated it 'BBB', which is a lower grade. Similarly, Power Grid is one of the biggest transmission utilities in the world. Its profit last year was about ₹ 9,000 crore. So, it cannot be called a weak company. In any case, Power Grid is a transmission company. It does not deal with renewable energy at all.

SHRI A.K. SELVARAJ: Sir, India has set a target of producing 40 per cent of total energy needs through renewal energy by 2030. Renewal energy accounted for 18.37 of the total installed power capacity in India in 2017. The reply given by the hon. Minister does not match with this figure. The State of Tamil Nadu is a leading State in producing renewal energy. So, we should support such States. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the steps taken to accelerate the growth of renewal energy to match with the targeted figure.

SHRI RAJ KUMAR SINGH: Sir, the rate of growth of renewal energy in India has been one of the fastest in the world. Our current installed capacity, as of November, is 62,000 megawatts and under installation is 6,500 megawatts. So, that will make it about 69,000 megawatts. Apart from that, we already bid out about 14,000 megawatts last year. If we add that 14,000 megawatts, taking into account the gestation period of 18 months, it will go up to 84,000 megawatts and next year again we are going to bid out about 30,000 or 40,000 megawatts. Our target is about 1,75,000 megawatts and we will achieve it easily. We will achieve it before 2022. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The last supplementary question was with reference to Tamil Nadu.

SHRI RAJ KUMAR SINGH: Sir, Tamil Nadu has a strong base of renewal energy. I don't have exact figures of Tamil Nadu right now. But so far as the growth is concerned and so far as encouragement given to renewal energy throughout the country is concerned, we have policies which give encouragement to renewal energy and that is why the growth of renewal energy in India is one of the fastest in the world. In fact, the Renewal Energy Country Attractiveness Index placed India at the second place after China.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I must compliment the Government, past and the present, for making renewal energy the corner stone of our policy for future electricity generation and the speed with which we have been growing is very commendable, as you rightly said just second to China. The issue here is about the hardware. The cost of renewal energy has been coming down progressively over the years because we have been able to make a lot of equipment ourselves within the country. Solar energy is the most important aspect of the renewal energy programme. I must point out to the hon. Minister that silicon wafers which are the core of the solar panels, which are being put up in the country without exception, are being imported and that is why all the solar panels which you are putting up are basically assembled in India. There was a programme, and I remember as a Minister of Heavy Industries, in which BHEL was to set up a silicon wafer

manufacturing facility in India which would facilitate not only the manufacturers of solar panels but bring down the tariff because the core issue of this question is to bring down the tariff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, the question is: Is silicon wafer manufacturing, which is a core item required for manufacturing of solar panels, going to be produced in India shortly or soon enough so that we can expand our programme and to make it more cost-effective?

SHRI RAJ KUMAR SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member is right. About 80 per cent of our solar panels, etc., are imported from China, Taiwan and countries like that. Now, we have a programme for encouraging 'Make in India' right from polysilicon onwards to wafers, panels and modules. We have issued an Expression of Interest for 20,000 MW. Only those companies can participate which are willing to set up manufacturing facilities from polysilicon onwards here. We did this after discussions with the industry. The industry said that we should provide them the market and they will bring the manufacturing. So, we have provided them the market. We have issued the Expression of Interest. I am quite sure that this will fructify.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: This is something which was already going to be set up, but stopped from being set up. So, please look into that.

श्री बसावाराज पाटिल: माननीय सभापति जी, इस प्रकार का ऐतिहासिक लक्ष्य प्राप्त करने के लिए सरकार ने जो काम किया है, इसको प्राप्त करने के लिए ऐसे कौन से financial initiatives लिए गए, जिनके कारण सरकार इस achievement को पाने में सफल हुई है?

श्री राज कुमार सिंह: सर, हमारी दो-तीन योजनाएँ हैं, जिनके अंतर्गत हमारी renewable energy का expansion हो रहा है। एक तो हमने accelerated depreciation दिया है। हमने 40 per cent accelerated depreciation दिया है। पहले यह 80 परसेंट था, अब यह 40 परसेंट हो गया है, लेकिन यह भी ठीक है। इसके अतिरिक्त हमारी एक VGF scheme है। हालाँकि अभी स्थिति यह है कि competitive rates इतने कम आ गए हैं कि अब VGF की जरूरत नहीं पड़ रही है। अभी हमने solar energy के लिए जो bid की है, वह 2 रुपए 45 पैसे प्रति यूनिट आ गई है और wind energy के लिए यह 2 रुपए 65 पैसे प्रति यूनिट आ गई है। इसलिए rates इतने कम हो गए हैं कि अब VGF की जरूरत नहीं है। इसके अतिरिक्त हमारी एक 'Solar Park Scheme' है, जिसके अन्तर्गत हम 40 हजार मेगावाट के लिए Solar Park set up कर रहे हैं, जिसमें 21 हजार मेगावाट का Solar Park set up हो गया है। Park set up करने के लिए हम funds देते हैं, जिसके अंतर्गत यह financial initiative आ रहा है।

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the Minister of New and Renewable Energy whether the Union Government would encourage the companies coming forward to produce energy from municipal solid waste through PPP model because some of the companies are not coming forward because of the huge investments but less prospects. So, I would like to know whether the Government will encourage those companies.

SHRI RAJ KUMAR SINGH: Sir, we have a subsidy scheme for generation of energy based on municipal solid waste. There are different rates of subsidy for different capacities. Apart from that, whatever power is generated, even though the cost of power, which is generated, is high at about six rupees per unit, it is a 'must run'. That means the DISCOMS have to buy it. So, this scheme is already there, and under this scheme, a number of waste-to-energy plants have been set up.

Renaming of Madurai airport

*153. DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that numerous representations have been received by Government for renaming the Madurai Airport as Muthuramalingam Thevar Airport; and

(b) if so, the status of the process of renaming of Madurai Airport?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU PUSAPATI): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Representations for renaming of Madurai Airport as Muthuramalingam Thevar Airport have been received by the Government. As per the extant practice, requests for naming/renaming of airports are considered based on the recommendations of the State Government concerned, supported by a resolution passed in the respective State Legislative Assembly. However, no such resolution has been received from the State Government of Tamil Nadu for renaming of Madurai Airport as Muthuramalingam Thevar Airport.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will ask only one supplementary. I would like to say that Muthuramalingam Thevar was a great freedom fighter, and, perhaps, he is being ignored because he was with Subhash Chandra Bose.