

issue. I think, the whole matter cannot be explained to the House during Question Hour because there are various issues involved. I request the Chair that in consultation with Business Advisory Committee, separate time be allotted for an exclusive discussion on power situation in the country.

so far as power projects are concerned, some have been taken up under the MOU method, and some have been taken up under the open bidding method.

The things mentioned by George sahab and others can be discussed threadbare. I am prepared to answer on all these points. There are many doubts lurking in the minds of the hon. Members which cannot be cleared during the Question Hour. So, my sincere appeal to the Chair is, if the House agrees, to allow an exclusive discussion on power situation in the country. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It can be discussed under Rule 193. I am allowing only one are supplementary.

[English]

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I request the Chair that the Rule under which this can be discussed be decided in the Business Advisory Committee...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Right.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Sir, the hon. Minister in his reply had stated that 94 projects are monitored directly by the Central Government of which 23 entrepreneurs have already signed Power Purchase Agreements. While the Government welcome the private entrepreneurs to participate in the power sector because it is the genuine need of the hour, it was thought of that per-unit-rate for consumption by the public will be taken care of while clearing these Power Purchase Agreements. May I know from the hon. Minister, out of these 23 private entrepreneurs that have signed the Power Purchase agreements, who has signed at the lowest per-unit-rate, and which is the State concerned? That is precisely my point.

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : As the hon. Prime Minister has informed just now, only two projects are cleared so far. As far as the Orissa project is concerned, it is with the State Government. Out of 94 only 23 Power Purchase Agreements are signed which include MOUs as well as letters of intent. As to the lowest per-unit-cost and other details, we will inform the hon. Member separately.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to seek a clarification from the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister has replied that in cases where a project is worth less than Rs.100 Crore, the States will be deciding. But nothing specific has been mentioned as far as the Union Territories are concerned. They are small territories and they being the Union Territories the responsibility should be with the Union

Government. I would like to know whether this aspect will be considered by the Union Government or will it be left to the Union Territory Administration?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : We have already discussed it with the hon. Prime Minister, we will examine the case...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

Diseases Caused by Coal Ash

*103. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the growing incidence of Tuberculosis and Asthma among employees of thermal power stations due to pollution caused by coal ash, noise and unclean environmental premises;

(b) if so, whether the Government have conducted any survey/study to assess the number of employees so affected in various thermal power stations across the country;

(c) if so, details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check this hazard in the thermal power stations?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) to (d). Government has not received any Report indicating the growing incidence of Tuberculosis and Asthma among the employees of Thermal Power Stations due to pollution caused by coal ash.

Environmental guidelines for Thermal Power Plants provide that proper and adequate precautionary measures should be taken :

- (i) To check the emission of dust from coal handling areas; workers engaged in the coal handling operations should be medically examined regularly for lung diseases, personal protection equipment such as dust masks, respirators, helmets, face shields etc should be provided to the workers.
- (ii) To control the level of noise below 85 dB (decible); workers are required to wear ear-plugs or ear-muffs for their protection.
- (iii) Proper house keeping and cleanliness should be maintained, both inside and outside plant.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply given by hon. Minister is erroneous and far from reality. Various newspapers such as Rashtriya Sahara, Janasatta have constantly been publishing reports that the layers of the ash emitted by these thermal power stations settle down in the houses nearby resulting in breathing disorders asthma and tuberculosis to the residents living there. The Government maintains that it is not aware of any such thing and it is very unfortunate that they have not got any survey conducted. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether Government propose to get any survey conducted with regard to serious diseases being caused by pollution and ash emitting from such thermal power stations.

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, as I already mentioned, the problem is due to coal ash, sulphur dioxide and the oxides converted into nitrogen oxide. So far we have received information specifically from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Even a question in this regard has been raised in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly during the last Session. No specific complaint has been received regarding the workers getting any disease due to this. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, concerned State Governments, the Central Pollution Board and the State Pollution Boards are watching and notices are issued to those who are violating the rules and regulations in this regard to maintain adequate pollution control facilities.

So far, 73 such thermal projects are surveyed. Out of 73, in 33 projects we have not found any major defect of any kind and in 40 projects, implementation of machine control measures is in progress. In Delhi, notices were issued to Badarpur and I.P. Thermal Stations for improvement and remaining 28 Thermal Stations are under examinations. Twelve notices were served in this regard. This is the status.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir as hon. Minister has admitted that out of total 73 stations, proper facilities are available only in 33 thermal power stations. There is no arrangement in rest of the 40 thermal power stations to check the pollution. In order to keep the environment free from pollution, you have mentioned only Badarpur thermal power station. Kindly give details of the action being taken regarding the rest of the stations. During the last Lok Sabha, I had made a similar query vide starred Question No.313 dated 25 April, 1995. At that time also it was stated that such an arrangement will be made shortly. More than one year has passed since. I am very sorry and as I said and the newspapers have also mentioned and published reports about its ill effect on the health of people and about the poison emitted in

the nearby residential areas but hon. Minister states that he has not received any such report and has not such information. I have specifically pointed out that in Madhya Pradesh due to lack of such arrangement in thermal power stations situated in Korba and Sangli, the people are undergoing immense sufferings. I would like to request hon. Minister to look into this matter and give a specific reply.

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the hon. Member is concerned there are some news reports about incidents of tuberculosis and asthma. But no specific case has been reported by the management of the thermal stations. In Madhya Pradesh Assembly also, a question has been raised and an answer has been given to the effect that no specific case has been reported. In one area, prevalence is there but mines are also located there. Our authorities are unable to say whether it is due to mines or thermal power stations.

As far as the thermal stations are concerned, there is no specific case of prevalence of tuberculosis and asthma.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : The labourers have written that they have got such a disease but their applications are consigned to a dustbin.

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Regarding the mini old thermal stations, I will write to the SEBs to enforce the standards again by way of using better equipments. We are helping the State Electricity Boards through Power Finance Corporation. We have also issued environmental measures to be undertaken by the thermal stations.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the Government is itself evasive. Hon'ble Minister is new in the Government, therefore, he is giving reply on the basis of the material that the officers of his Ministry have provided to him. Being a politician he must be having experience. Had he visited any thermal power plant or gone around it, he would not have given such a reply. Chandrapura Thermal Power Plant near Bokaro, causes burns to the people. When a Member, irrespective of the party, visits that plant, people living there always complain that they are really in agony. Now the hon'ble Minister has told that the environment Ministry has issued guidelines in this regard. Now, the management should make all these arrangements. My first question is as to whether these arrangements have been made by the management for the safety of health of its workers or not? The people living around the power plant who do not work in the

plant suffer due to ash and other problems. My second question is, whether the Government propose to take some measures in this regard? The hon'ble Minister has stated that a survey has been conducted but the management has not submitted any report so far. Therefore, the management is at fault. It should submit the report. Sir, through you, I would like to ask whether the Government propose to take some remedial measures in this regard by conducting an inquiry on its own?

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Definitely, Sir, so far no specific incident had been reported to our Ministry. If the hon. Members have any specific incident, let them intimate me. In addition to this, the States have their own medical equipment. As far as Thermal Power Stations are concerned, the Central Government is keeping them neat and hygienic. In addition to regular doctors, we are sending specialists there for periodical medical check-up.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : What about the people living around the power plants? What are you doing for them?

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : In all the localities the clinics are functioning. The specialists are also visiting once a week. If there is any specific case pertaining to any State, the hon. Member may bring it to my notice.

Now, I will come to air pollution. Coal is used in thermal stations. We are constantly giving money for controlling air pollution. We are also giving equipment like ESP etc. for reducing ash flying in open. Although it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Power yet we will again review everything.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : He is saying that he will review everything. This is an assurance.

[Translation]

SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also hail from coal mines area. There are many coal mines apart from a thermal power plant there. The coal handling plant which has been built there releases so much dust that the entire area becomes dark thereby reducing the visibility to almost zero. Not only workers but even the people living in that area suffer from this dust and it causes many diseases like pneumoconiosis. This is an occupational disease. No inquiry is conducted by the Government to check it and no compensation is given to the patient. The previous Government had not paid any attention to this problem. Now, I would like to request the present Government that it should pay full attention to it. I would like to know whether any action is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard or not?

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ash released by Korba, Sarani, Thermal Power Plant in Madhya Pradesh causes asthma, silicosis

and other lung diseases to the people. It causes breathing problem also...*(Interruptions)* Besides, electronic items of the people are also getting damaged. I would like to know whether, on behalf of the Government, hon'ble Minister would get some of the workers medically examined by constituting an expert committee and take action by laying the report of that committee in this House. At the same time, will the Government provide any special medical facility to those workers who have fallen ill?...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Sir, we would issue fresh instructions to the State Government to give us status report for ensuring better compliance of emission standards.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, it is a fact that the fly-ash of the thermal power stations creates a pollution problem. There is also the problem of disposal of fly-ash. The Central Fuel Research Institute of Dhanbad had developed a technology to utilise this fly-ash for fertiliser and for making of fly-ash bricks.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Central Government will assist the State Government so that the fly-ash can be utilised for fertiliser as it has been done in Kloaghat Thermal Power Station in West Bengal and also in Bengal Power Station? I would also like to know, in order to do that whether the Central Government would assist the State Government in order to mitigate the problem of fly-ash.

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Mr. Speaker Sir, this problem is coming only with the old thermal power stations, even though for using the fertiliser, definitely we will give instructions. The Central Government has also instructed the State Government to establish some fly-ash machines. Fly-ash machines have been set up by the State Governments and the Central Government is assisting all the States whenever the proposal are received. The Central Government is giving the finance for this.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : They should also utilise the fly-ash for fertilizer and for making bricks.

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : I will examine this, Sir.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Sir, this question is very specific. Authentic information has been asked for as to whether there are such cases and while giving the reply the Government has said that there was no report.

Sir, the notices of these questions were given 20 days in advance. Since all Members of Parliaments from the respective areas are complaining very severely that there are cases of tuberculosis and asthma, my only question is, wherever such thermal power stations are there; has the Government received such reports? I would also like to know whether the Central

Government has taken pains to find out from the thermal power stations, how many such cases are there and what the remedies.

Whatever guidelines have been given are under the provisions of the Act. We are not interested in knowing the provisions of the Act. We are interested in the implementation of these provisions.

DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI : Sir, we have received almost all information from all State Electricity Boards. The Maharashtra State Electricity Board has recently conducted a survey in June 1994. They have told us that there was no incident, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh Electricity Boards have also reported 'no incidents.' Similar answers have been given by the remaining States.

In addition to that, again I will instruct all the concerned State Electricity Board authorities to review the prevalence of such diseases.

[Translation]

Satellite Survey

*104. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether a Satellite survey of the flood and drought affected areas in National Capital Territory of Delhi has been conducted/proposed to be conducted;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) to (c). A flood inundation map of Yamuna river near Delhi was prepared using Indian Remote Sensing Satellite data of December 14, 1995. Currently, a project entitled "Yamuna Morphological Studies" is being executed jointly by Department of Space (DOS) and Central Water Commission (CWC), which includes study of the flood situation of Yamuna river near Delhi. Remote sensing satellite data is being currently used for drought assessment and monitoring in eleven states of the country which are mostly agriculturally important and vulnerable to drought, under a project funded by Department of Agriculture and Co-operation and as such, this project does not cover the National Capital Territory of Delhi. However, during the Ninth Plan period, this project is expected to the entire country which would include the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wanted to know from the hon. Minister as to why Delhi has not been included in the areas selected for conducting satellite survey. Lakhs of people suffer losses and people living on the banks of Yamuna are rendered homeless whenever floods occur in Delhi. The people living on the Yamuna banks suffer losses of life and property and their livestock perishes. In his reply the hon. Minister has stated that a satellite survey of Delhi has been conducted but in the very first and last line of the reply it has been stated clearly.

[English]

"this project does not cover the National Capital Territory of Delhi."

[Translation]

I would like to know as to why he is making self contradictory statements at the same time. Does this survey costs cores of rupees? Why this project was not included in the Eighth Five Year Plan?

[English]

SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH : Sir, if the hon. Member looks at the reply, he will find that as far as floods are concerned, for Yamuna, the Yamuna Morphological Study has been completed and the results are available for action. As far as droughts are concerned - the question relates both to floods and droughts - the Space Department is doing a special study for drought affected areas. Those are identified by the Planning Commission. They are in different areas and Delhi is not a part of that.

Now, there is also a separate proposal to set up State Level centres. Such centres are already there in a number of States. It is our intention to extend that to all the States in the Ninth Five Year Plan. I hope that clarifies the position.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my point was at this project was not so costly that it could not be included in the Eighth Five Year Plan. He said that it would be taken up in the Ninth Five Year with the rest of the country. During the floods last time 4 lakhs houses were damaged in Delhi and almost 25 thousand cattle were dead. Will the Government include Delhi in the project when this figure reaches 10 lakh. What is his parameter for its selection in the Ninth five Year Plan and not in the Eighth Five Year Plan.

SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH : Sir, I would like to clarify that in view of the flood problem in Delhi a study of space for river Yamuna is being conducted. Results of this study is available with the State Governments. In regard to the drought prone areas.....