

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (b). The National Task Force (NTF) was constituted by the Government in February, 1995. It has been entrusted the responsibility of implementing recommendations relating to Bulk Power and Transmission Tariffs and also to provide a forum for periodic consultations with various agencies connected with the implementation of these recommendations. The NTF is headed by Chairman, CEA and includes, inter alia, the Chairmen of the Regional Electricity Boards.

(c) and (d). The National Task Force has, inter-alia, made the following recommendations :

- (i) Availability based generation tariff will be adopted in respect of all thermal stations including future Independent Power Producers.
- (ii) While fixing the 'merit order' operation of the generating plants in a region, due weightage will be given to the transmission losses and other grid conditions. The operation of the 'merit order' system, to be introduced on a regional basis, will be entrusted to the Regional Electricity Boards under the aegis of the Central Electricity Authority.
- (iii) In respect of central thermal power stations, the fixed charges will be apportioned on the basis of 'entitlement'.

(e) and (f). The Central Electricity Authority will formulate the parameters for determining the plant availability factor for thermal power stations and this would be reviewed after every two years. The dates for switch over to the new tariff regime, based on Plant Availability Factor as determined by CEA, would be notified by the Government of India.

Rural Electrification

*191. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Rural electricity rules need change" appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated August 24, 1996;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the number of villages yet to be electrified in the country; and

(d) the time by which all the villages in the country are likely to be electrified?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir. The news item draws attention mainly to the need for a review of the

existing definition of village electrification as also the rates of interest charged by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) from its borrowers viz the SEB's.

(b) Government is in the process of reviewing the existing definition of Village Electrification. The views of all the State Governments in this regard has also been sought for.

With regard to the interest rates charged by REC, as a public financial institution, it borrows funds from the capital market in addition to the loans it receives from the Government. REC in turn charges differential rates of interest taking into account the viability of the schemes and other relevant factors. It operates at a margin of only 0.5% above the Rate of Interest at which it receives the Minimum Needs Programme loan from the Government.

(c) As per available information, as on 31st March, 1996, 80,021 villages remain to be electrified in the country.

(d) Rural Electrification is a continuous programme. Physical and financial targets for the programme are fixed annually by the Planning Commission in consultation with the State Governments/State Electricity Boards, after taking into account the availability of funds and other inputs.

[Translation]

Non-Conventional Energy Sources for Irrigation

*192. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to start power generation from non-conventional energy sources;

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in the near future to make the solar energy, wind energy and other equipments, used in installation of non-conventional energy sources of energy, easily available at cheaper rates; and

(c) the amount likely to be spent on this project and the time by which the same is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (c). The Government is giving priority to power generation from non-conventional energy sources such as wind, small hydro, biomass and solar energy. The Ministry has been implementing a wide range of programmes for this purpose, as a result of which more than 1000 MW of power generation capacity from non-conventional energy sources, has been installed in the country.

The Government provides fiscal and financial incentive under a wide range of programmes implemented by the Ministry for the promotion of non-conventional energy, such as the Integrated Rural