

## Straight Question

Sumantra Banerjee

# Haldia unit will match global standards

*Does CESC always deserve the criticism it faces from the public— be it a power cut, a cable fault or even if lights fail at Eden Gardens during an IPL match? What really deters the state's only private sector power utility from marketing its image of owning the country's first state-of-the-art green thermal power station at Budge Budge? Did CESC really fail to anticipate this rise in demand for power? The most erudite and accessible managing director of the company in an exclusive interview with Hindustan Times answers one and all. Excerpts:*

**As per the Electricity Act 2003, power utility market will be thrown open and a consumer will be able to choose his distribution company. Are you thinking of diversifying your business? Is there any chance of seeing CESC in power equipment manufacturing sector?**

We believe in doing what we know. We will be in power utility sector, as we are presently in. There are only four to five companies doing business in power equipment manufacturing sector in the world. One of which is Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL). The kind of expertise and the amount of investment needed only for its research and development wing to run the business is presently not with the CESC. Rather, we believe in investing in capacity building, strengthening our distribution network to cater to the need of our consumers in best possible way. Honestly speaking, CESC, is waiting for the power market to become open for competition. There are always two sides of a coin. So is in the case of a monopoly firm. We rather welcome competition. Consumers then can judge just — why CESC is still considered to be the best in power utility sector. Our work speaks for us.

**The upcoming 2000-mega watt thermal power generation station at Haldia will produce 8,000 metric tonnes of fly ashes daily.**

CESC's second thermal power unit is

perhaps the best in the country in terms of technology as well protecting environment. The Haldia generation station will have state-of-the-art technology and can be compared with any thermal power generation station in Europe, USA or anywhere. This will be at par in terms of taking care of the environment as well as generating electricity. We are already on the verge of inking a deal with a UK-based multinational firm, which will take care of the fly ash to be generated from that unit. I assure, CESC thinks of its consumers, as well as people living around its generation units.



**Why CESC always has to face criticism for poor distribution network? Even your transmission system too, comes under scathing attacks.**

We appreciate criticism, but it should not be only for criticism's sake. If that is the case, then how come CESC has the lowest transmission and distribution (T&D) loss? Yes, we need augmentation of our import capacity thinking of the future. All our upcoming units,

be it in Balagarh or Haldia are few hundred kilometres away from CESC's operational area. Even being our own generation unit, we have to import electricity from those generation stations. So for drawing power from Haldia or Balagarh, we surely need to upgrade our system. At present we have drawing capacity of little more than 760 mega watts. The highest that the CESC took was 600 mega watts in last April. For meeting the total demand for electricity, we really don't need more than that. But thinking of our future generation augmentation projects, we surely do.

**But your 1912 is nothing but a flop-show.**

Previously, our employees manned the 1912 system. But since the past six months, IBM is taking care of it. If CESC can invest billion dollars in bringing up new mega generation station, we can also invest same amount to providing best services.

letters@hindustantimes.com