BBMP’s unfinished business creates high-volt menace

Danger: Storm water drain that may overflow and a transformer nearby

The retaining wall of the storm water drain in Victoria Layout had collapsed last year

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The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike’s (BBMP) half-hearted attempts at repair during the elections have put the lives of residents of Palm Grove Road in Victoria Layout at risk. The Palike started building a retaining wall of a storm water drain after it collapsed last year, but left the work unfinished due to the elections. Now, with the rain pelting down there is no cover to keep the water in. What makes the situation all the more dangerous is a BESCOM transformer that is located right next to the drain.

The BBMP had taken up construction of a bridge along the street for the SWD in October 2017 and finished work on it by February 2018. However, the space next to the transformer was left uncovered on either side and BBMP did not respond to repeated requests from the residents in the area.

However, the blame game between BBMP and BESCOM had begun even then. Peter Babu Samson, a resident of the area, said, “They took up work long ago and left the SWD uncovered by not constructing the retaining wall. Around February, when we checked with BBMP, they said work will be taken up after the elections. But that did not happen.”

When the monsoon was nearing, they again checked with BESCOM officials, who put the ball in BBMP’s court. “We were concerned if the drain next to the transformer overflowed, there would be risk of electrocution. BBMP should not leave the work it begins unfinished,” he said.

Another resident in the area, Joseph D’Souza, said, the road was flooded last year too during the rains. “When the BBMP took up work, we thought this year we wouldn’t have to worry about flooding. But, the drain was left unprotected. So, the purpose of constructing the SWD was defeated. And the transformer is scary as even a small short circuit can lead to a mishap when the drain overflows.”

He said the spot has become a dumping yard for people, further worsening matters. The residents also accuse BBMP of not responding to their requests. BM tried to contact MB Dwarkanath, but he was not available for comment.
Private power cos slam cost-plus tariff plan

New Delhi, July 22: Private power producers have slammed a proposed amendment to the electricity tariff policy as "regressive", saying re-introduction of cost-plus regime for calculating cost of power produced by PSUs like NTPC shields them from competition and is "anti-consumer".

The Association of Power Producers (APP), in a July 13 letter to the power minister R.K. Singh, said the preference for the cost-plus regime, where a generator is compensated for its entire cost plus a mark up, has led to purchasing of power from state-owned power plants at Sholapur and Barh Stage-2 at ₹5.30 and ₹5.68 per unit respectively against private power owners willing to supply the same for ₹3.25.

Greenfield projects commissioned after 2010 of NTPC generate power for ₹5-7 per unit as compared to a maximum cost of ₹4.17 of a private generator, it said.

"Presently, with sufficient generation capacity available, such exemption from competitive framework is neither needed nor desirable. It would act as an obstacle for development of power market and different market products therein which can serve the diverse needs of power by different consumer categories," it said.

The association cited the example of renewable energy sector which has successfully migrated to competitive procurement and has seen substantial drop in cost of power. It said the Tariff Policy 2006 stipulated all future requirement of power is to be procured through competitive bidding with exemption for public sector projects for five years, that is till January 2011.

"This was in line with the objective of Tariff Policy, 2006 to ensure availability of electricity to consumers at reasonable and competitive rates. The five-year moratorium was given to NTPC to get adjusted to competitive regime of power procurement," it wrote. "With the proposed amendment, the de facto situation should not be converted to de jure situation with reversing of the earlier progressive framework of 2006."

NTPC had requested for extension of January 2011 timeline which was not agreed to by the Ministry of Power based on CERC advice dated September 16, 2010 that said tariffs discovered through competitive bidding route significantly lowered cost of electricity than regulated ones under cost-plus regime.

Giving illustrations, the association said in the last 6-8 years, all components of the cost of supply that are controlled by government monopolies have seen an increase of up to 300 per cent while the cost of generation (where private sector has contributed significantly) has come down by 21 per cent due to enhanced efficiency.

— PTI

Power cuts tomorrow

Bengaluru: There will be no power in areas falling under FI feeder of 66/11 KV Jayadeva station due to Metro rail work from 10 am to 11 pm on Tuesday. These include IAS Officers' Colony, BTM II Stage, EWS Colony and surrounding areas. Call 1912 to lodge complaints. TNN