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Politics of power: City hit

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April 1: Power cuts, after a brief respite, are back to make your lives miserable. Now that the BBMP election is over, the authorities are making little attempt to cover up the power crisis. Power cuts of nearly four hours are now being imposed across the city, with Bescom threatening to extend them for up to six hours a day as the weeks go by and the summer gets even more intense.

“Bescom seems to be playing an April fool trick on the people. It tried to make them believe the power situation had eased during the election, but began load shedding the minute they were held,” says an angry industrialist, who feels Bescom should at least be kind enough to announce when people can expect to go without power during the day. “We could then schedule our work accordingly. But Bescom doesn’t seem to care as it imposes the power cuts any time it pleases,” he says.

While the rest of the city suffers, VIP and VVIP buildings are spared the power cuts, thanks to special installations in their grounds. The common consumer then ends up paying for the power they guzzle every day. “The monthly consumption by these buildings, whenever there is load-shedding, can be equated to two-and-a-half days of energy consumed by the entire city,” says a Bescom official.

For instance the Vidhana Soudha and Vikas Soudha have an auto change-over system, that keeps their power supply going, even when there is load shedding in their surroundings.

“These buildings basically have two transformers. When there is a power cut, there is an auto change-over to another transformer, which makes sure that they are not affected,” explains an officer. The Raj Bhavan, the Chief Minister’s official residence, Krishna, the residence of the Chief Justice, the ministers’ quarters, the Balabrooie guest house and the chief secretary’s residence also get uninterrupted power during the worst of the power cuts.

While no one argues that government work is important and must go on, whatever the cost, energy experts feel Bescom needs to come up with an upper limit of power usage across the sectors for more efficient management of its distribution.

“We need to bring in some mandatory guidelines to save power. The energy saved during Earth Hour shows that such strategies can prove effective,” says T.V. Ramachandra of the Energy and Wetland Research Group, Indian Institute of Science.

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