

# Electricity to households on DVC agenda

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**Calcutta, July 12:** Central power utility Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) is weighing the option of power to domestic consumers and commercial units within its jurisdiction spread across Bengal and Jharkhand.

In Bengal, DVC's command area includes parts of Purulia, Bankura, Burdwan, Hooghly and Howrah districts.

Dhanbad, Giridih, Bokaro, Hazaribagh, parts of Koderma and Ranchi fall within the company's command area in Jharkhand.

At present, DVC's distribution system primarily caters to high-tension (HT) consumers who purchase power in bulk. These include industrial units, large commercial

units and residential colonies. Indian Railways, Steel Authority of India Ltd, Tata Steel and Coal India subsidiaries are among the key power consumers of DVC.

The public sector undertaking is now looking to supply power to domestic consumers and small commercial units such as shops, hotels and theatres that are low-tension consumers.

"We are currently exploring whether there are prospective low tension consumers in DVC's command area," DVC executive director (system) M.M. Kumar said.

DVC will have to set up infrastructure to facilitate low tension supply. "That aspect will also be looked into based on our findings," Kumar said.

The development implies



## SMALL UNITS ALSO ON RADAR

- DVC plans to sell power to domestic consumers and small commercial units such as shops, hotels and theatres in Bengal and Jharkhand
- Till now, DVC had been catering to consumers who buy in bulk
- DVC has to set up infrastructure for low-tension power supply
- It will also have to compete with state power utilities in Bengal and Jharkhand

that DVC will have to compete with the respective state power utilities in Bengal and Jharkhand.

However, sources suggest that the move may not be beneficial for the cash-strapped power utility. "DVC's current

stakeholders include both the Bengal and Jharkhand government. Both are suffering from heavy transmission and distribution losses on account of theft and pilferage. With DVC looking to supply low tension power, it will have

to share the burden of such loss," a source said.

Distribution losses in Bengal stand at around 25-28 per cent, while they are more than 30 per cent in Jharkhand.

DVC officials, however, said steps were being planned to tackle distribution losses. "We may go for a prepaid metering system where consumers will only pay for a certain amount of load for a certain time period similar to cellular recharges," a senior DVC official said.

The official added that the PSU, with debts of around Rs 10,000 crore in its books, would face difficulty in completing the 300 km transmission network proposed in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-17). "We are prioritising the layout of transmission and distribution

network. At present, work is being undertaken for around 92 km in Bengal. Besides finance, land acquisition is another hurdle for transmission projects," the official said.

Meanwhile, DVC has received its Rs 1600-crore bond issue plan in this fiscal and sought the Centre's guarantee.

"We had approached the government again for a guarantee on Rs 1,600 crore for bond issue in 2015-16. Last year, we had sent a proposal to the Union government for Rs 1,600-crore bonds. We were given permission but without government guarantee on Rs 800 crore and it did not materialise," chairman Andrew WK Langstieh said.

DVC wants to service some of its short-term debt and fund ongoing projects.