

Build Norochcholai

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by Ranil Wijayapala

The Institute of Engineers yesterday called upon the Government to immediately implement the Norochcholai coal power plant as clearly indicated in the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) long-term plan for the country to benefit from lower electricity tariffs.

Addressing a press conference yesterday at the IESL auditorium B.R.O. Fernando, President of the Institute of Engineers said the average

prices of electricity in the country has reached to one of the highest in the world.

The IESL President said the higher electricity tariffs in the country was due to the delay in taking decisions regarding the implementation of the coal fired power plants.

He predicted the prices of electricity will rise to about Rs.11 per unit since this high price is inadequate to cover the costs of generation and supply of electricity, as the CEB is compelled to resort to

the use of emergency power, using auto diesel.

"The Institution is of the view that the present black-outs and price increases are direct consequences of non-implementation of the CEB's long-term plan", he added.

Engineer Tilak Siyambalapitiya said decision-makers have repeatedly delayed the implementation of the projects in the CEB long-term plan.

"The same game is going on at present too ignoring the

professionals' view", Siyambalapitiya added.

He added that at present there is not a single power plant under construction to meet the future power demand of the country.

All the power plants now under construction are only a solution for the present power crisis and all the projects under construction are behind schedule.

He said the cost of ignoring all the long-term plans will result in doubling the CEB's fuel bill thus increasing the electricity bills of the consumers.

He emphasised the necessity of immediate decisions regarding the long-term plans

of the CEB instead of taking decisions regarding short-term plans. "With the implementation of the long-term plans, we can bridge the gap in short-term demand", he added.

He said if an immediate decision is taken regarding the implementation of the Norochcholai coal fired power plant the electricity tariff will not exceed Rs.7.

Siyambalapitiya added that the Government has no option other than implementing all coal fired power plants in all three proposed sites in Norochcholai, Mawella and Trincolmalee to fulfil the long-term demand for electricity in the country.