

While State uses power from national grid for A/Cs

'Rule arbitrarily inconveniences only average householder'

By Chitra Weeraratne

The Electricity generated by the Ceylon Electricity Board and the Lanka Electricity Company, is being used to operate the air conditioner, at the Parliament, the Presidential Secretariat, Araliyagaha Mandiraya, the office of the Leader of the Opposition, the Ministry of Justice, Superior Courts Complex and the Bandaranaike International Airport, despite the prohibition imposed under Emergency Regulations on the use of electricity, from the national grid to operate air-conditioner, Attorney-at-Law, Ms. Lilanthi de Silva, has complained to the Supreme Court in a fundamental rights violation plea.

Consequent to regulation 6 of the Emergency Regulation (Restricting the use of

Electricity) No. (1) of 2000, the average citizens are ordered to reduce their monthly consumption of electricity by 25 per cent, or else they will face a surcharge of 25 per cent on their monthly electricity bills. This condition restraining the average householders from using adequate electricity for their basic needs.

Although Regulation 7 of this emergency provision, gazetted on May 31, this year, prohibits the use of electricity supplied by the CEB and the Lanka Electricity Company, to light up carnival grounds, shop windows, and for the operation of A-Cs, the petitioner has observed that quite a large number of shop windows, and some casinos operative in Colombo, have been lit, overnight, using the power supply generated from the National

Grid. Steps have not been taken by the authorities to disconnect their supplies, the petition alleged.

The petition also said that steps are being taken to air condition the residences of 25 high ranking police officers, using the same supply of electricity, from the national grid.

The petitioner, said that the recently imposed regulation, is arbitrarily applied by the state, to inconvenience only the average householders.

The petition requested the court to grant leave to proceed, declare the violation of fundamental rights of the petitioner by the respondents, the Attorney General, the Ceylon Electricity Board and the Lanka Electricity

Company.

The petition also requested the Supreme

Court to declare the new regulation arbitrary and bad in law.