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THE ISLAND

From light to darkness?

The CEB has told all consumers of electricity to reduce their consumption by 20 per cent each month or face a 25 per cent surcharge. This policy of imposing a surcharge of 25 per cent on the small consumer of electricity is utterly unfair. Some consumers only switch on 2 lights at night for about 3 hours. If they have to make a reduction of 20 per cent per month, they will have to revert to using kerosene lamps for one week each month.

The big consumer however, will not find it difficult to cut down on his electricity consumption. He can refrain from using his air conditioners, switch off garden lights, change from using electric cookers to gas cookers and so on. He can be flexible as he has a choice.

In other words, the rich consumer, the

squanderer is getting off scot-free while the poor, frugal consumer, who finds it difficult to reduce his electricity usage, is being penalised and punished especially when the cost of living has escalated and the poor man find it difficult to meet his bills.

Consumers should be allowed a minimum of 100 - 150 units every month. Thereafter surcharges can be imposed on a rising scale.

In actual fact, however, stringent measures of this sort are being imposed by the CEB because of its own incompetence. The CEB engineers since the power cuts of 1996 dilly dallied and failed to provide an adequate supply of electricity to meet the

rising demand.

These CEB planning engineers have to take the blame and they must face punitive charges.

How is it that other countries like India can increase their electricity supplies to meet the domestic and industrial needs of 1 billion people. It will do the CEB good, to learn from our neighbour how to provide an adequate supply of electricity for this country - a population of 19 million.

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Opinion