

Speaking at the Launch of UDAY Web-Portal & Mobile App

January 04, 2017

Ms Zabin Rahman Ahmad, Ritu Maheshwari, the lady who has worked relentlessly for many many days along with her team and I think a big round of applause for Ritu and her team. Ladies and gentlemen, I have lot of distinguished guests here – we have the special representative from Telangana, Dr Ashok Jhunhunwala, several heads of PSUs from the Ministry of Power, friends from the media, ladies and gentlemen.

It's a great day. We have reached the figure of 20. But 21 is considered more auspicious. So when do we sign the 21st, now Mr Verma the onus is on you, get that 21st in quickly. Within a week? *Chalo*, that's nice. But I think it's a great move forward, we have nearly 75% of India's population and over 90% of the debt of the DISCOMS covered under the UDAY program today. Odisha is a state which has private sector companies running their distribution network, so probably, they may not get much benefits or qualify under UDAY. Dialogue is going on with a few states which is at an advanced stage, so as Mr Verma said, we may soon get those 2 or 3 balance states which are still left out. And many of the states don't have DISCOMS. They have the utilities as a part of the power department.

So in effect, the UDAY map is inching towards getting completely filled up. And I must compliment the Ministry of Power Secretary, other officials, Joint Secretary, Executive Director from Rural Electrification Corporation; the entire team has worked very well, very hard. And, it's truly a great sense of satisfaction that it gives all of us that we have been able to change the way public programs are implemented, the way they are monitored. We have actually made it now a citizen process. There were times when all these MoUs used to be in the files, RTIs had to be put out, then there were fights over what information is available on RTI, what is not available on RTI.

The first major step was when we put all the MoUs in the public domain, and now with the launch of UDAY portal we will have the opportunity to put targets and

actual achievement out regularly for the people of India, for the people of each state and for all the states to see what is happening in the country.

In fact, I would urge my friends from the media to please look at the progress under UDAY from different states from time to time and keep advising us, criticizing us, hopefully also, complimenting us, if at all you find something worth the effort that is being put in by this entire team. But please do let the public know what's happening and I welcome criticism because I think that's what has helped us improve our work, improve the performance of this sector. And this constructive engagement between all stakeholders is the strength of the power sector. After all, it will also lead to competitive federalism, the states I would hope, would look at each other's performance and get encouraged to do better.

Of course, Ms Secretary you will have to make sure that all the states put in the data. Even today, I am told that two states have not given data; one, of course, I can understand because they have just signed UDAY very recently. But a neighboring state, which is going to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of UDAY and has the largest problems in the power sector, I don't know for what reason has not given you the data as yet. I would urge you to address a letter to the state and find out if there are any certain reasons why they are not giving the data. After all, they had promised to give 24 hours power to everybody. If you don't give data, how do we know whether everybody got 24 hours power?

And, I think that applies to all the states. Once we have given commitments to the people of India, once we have taken up cudgels to improve the power sector, it's equally incumbent that we provide data in the public domain. We let the world know what we have done, what we have not done and support each other's efforts. After all, if I wish to support a state I can only do it if I have the right data. You can't plan, you can't improve unless your base, the base on which you work, the base on which you plan your programs is correct, is accurate and is available sufficiently in time. Take for example the Rajasthan DISCOM, the fact that Rajasthan has engaged with the centre literally on a daily basis, including a call yesterday I got from the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, has helped us take the benefits of UDAY to Rajasthan and the state which had the highest losses, almost

Rs 15,000 crore annual losses, to my mind will be the best performing DISCOM probably in a year or so we may find that that DISCOM is out of losses. So less than two years from the time of UDAY's launch, you would have converted the biggest loss-making DISCOM to a profit making DISCOM. Thanks to this engagement, thanks to the collective efforts of the government of India, the state government, the DISCOM and all the, the entire ecosystem is working to support the success of the DISCOMs, the success of UDAY.

In fact, the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana and IPDS could not be successful unless it was also dovetailed along with the UDAY program, or along with programs to monitor and improve the workings of the DISCOMS. Otherwise, my own experience is that money just goes down the drain. Infrastructure is created in silos and the holistic improvement that is expected out of these government programs is not witnessed by the people of India.

Prime Minister Modi often says, 'transparency is the key to good governance and e-governance is the only effective way of transparent governance'. So I think UDAY, being brought on the portal and also on the mobile app, which I hope all of you will download and keep seeing what is happening under UDAY, will help take transparency to the next level. It will help the government of India also monitor each state's performance. I would urge you all the officials of the Ministry of Power that I was seeing that you have written about certain states having done extremely well under UDAY and I saw that you have provided some rankings. Is it also on the UDAY app? So on the UDAY app you find certain rankings which based on the 30th September, 2016 data and that is available data as I said a particular state chooses not to give data then I think we will have to see what has to be done. Can we make it mandatory also under our various programs, the data has to be shared under UDAY?

But I think if you have recognized that Gujarat has been the best performing, Karnataka has performed second best, Maharashtra has performed third best, Andhra has performed fourth best, Chhattisgarh has performed fifth best, Haryana has performed sixth best. If these data are available then I think it's time we also come up with some reward schemes. The states and the DISCOMS

who have done well should be rewarded. So far the focus has always been to make programs for the badly performing DISCOMS. So even when I was allocating funds under UDAY, under Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana or IPDS, our focus was give more money to Uttar Pradesh, give more money to Bihar, to the states which had the problem and were not able to really serve their people well. But I think after the launch of UDAY, we will have to have the carrot and stick approach that those states which really perform well have to be supported with more programs and more innovative programs. So I would urge you to come up as quickly as possible with atleast one or two new states to recognize the good performance of states under UDAY. That should also include giving 100% households electricity in their homes that was a program we launched only a couple of weeks ago, the 100% electrification of every household in the country. I think dovetailing performance under UDAY and progress under 100% household electrification we need to develop some new schemes so that other states are also encouraged to come quickly under the umbrella of reform, under the umbrella of improvement and performance, under the umbrella of service to each citizen of this country.

In fact, the last scheme that Mr Kapoor launched in the MNRE – AJAY, the Atal Jyoti Yojana, also in a manner of speaking is a program which is supporting those states which are more backward. It has helped states like Uttar Pradesh; it has helped states like Assam, Odisha, Bihar, not Bihar, Jharkhand. Those states where electrification was less than 50%, we have given them a support in terms of solar street lights. Now every program that we have been creating so far has been focused on the states which were left behind the development cycle. And I am glad you have done that. It's very important that these states are given a push and encouragement to come in to the mainstream. But at the same time, we will also be recognizing the good performance under UDAY and the various apps that we have brought out so far will help us in assessing the performance. And maybe we could even do a citizen poll to help us assess what the people of India think about their state unit's performance, state government's and state DISCOM's performance. We could also have a citizen engagement to see what the citizens feel about the central government's performance on the power sector and that

will help us continuously keep improving. Because I believe you cannot build a long term future only on short term thinking. You will have to really think long term and it's not that I have said that. It's something I learnt from Billy Cox. But really we need to do some long term thinking and develop a long term future for the country, not just look at things on the short term and not just look at programs which are short term give-and-take or short term benefit to the states and the DISCOMS.

But I am delighted that now we are entering more a phase of effective implementation. I am sure with the successful conclusion of these various agreements with the DISCOMs we now have a roadmap laid out of how the sector is going to move from now going forward. I hope the monitoring will be very strict but also will be available on the mobile app or on the portal for the world to see what kind of monitoring is happening, what is being done to encourage states. For example, NTPC has done some very good work in Rajasthan by helping them to improve the working of their power generating units and bringing down the cost of generating power. Now this is something which needs to be brought out in the public domain, possibly now, through the portal, through press releases so that it encourages other states which may need any help. So maybe if Uttar Pradesh needs any help, if Bihar needs any help, if Maharashtra needs any help in improving their generating capacity, then possibly we are willing to help through NTPC. If anybody needs any help in the intra-state transmission grid, I am sure Mr Jha from Powergrid will be happy to support any state which needs help within their state. But we need to work in this collaborative approach where centre and our supporting organizations work with the states hand-in-hand, help them in every possible way that we can and share best practices through the portal, through the mobile. These best practices can help other states pick up ideas and move forward on a faster trajectory.

And I am sure the benefits that UDAY is stated to give, I was told that Telangana will benefit to the tune of about Rs 6,000 crores over the next three or four years, Assam to the tune of Rs 1,600 crores. And going forward, post 2019, once all these DISCOMs come into profit and bring down their AT&C losses significantly, as per their MoUs, Tenlangana's annual benefit will be to the tune of about Rs 6,000

crores. And that benefit is not as if some benefit to the state government, it's a benefit to the people of Telangana, the people of Assam Rs 6,129 crore, the estimated benefit to the people of Telangana and Rs 1,550 crores annually benefit to the people of Assam. So I think it's a great move forward that more and more states are joining the UDAY program. I am sure we will all work together to help them achieve their targets. We have some very good examples in Haryana about how Haryana has been able to leverage the benefits of feeder metering, feeder separation under Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana, better monitoring of theft within the state, encouraging people to start paying their bills. And, Panchkula, in Haryana, has become the first district in the state to get 24 hour power supply. All the 173 villages there got a New Year gift in terms of power supply, 24/7, because these feeders have reduced their line losses to below 20%. I don't know what the earlier levels were but they may have been upward of 30% knowing that Haryana was in a bad shape.

So if this message as it goes to more and more people that if your feeder starts paying its bills, the collection efficiency improves, the AT&C losses reduce. You can actually get 24/7 power in your area is a big message. I hope this message encourages other states to do better and, going forward, all these best practices that different states are working with will help us perform better, help us reach out to the people better. We have reset our target to reach power to every home by 2019. I hope this team sitting in front of me will not let us down and will make sure that the collaboration with state strengthens and we are able to take power to the 5 crore families who have been deprived of power for 7 decades.

The Coal Ministry has made rapid strides to ensure that adequate coal is provided to all these state DISCOMs and all other power producers. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has been working to get better prices for solar power. We will shortly be coming out with bidding process for wind energy. And all of these efforts, collectively, have helped improve the energy security of India, bring down pollution levels, improve the health of the people of India and ensure that every citizen of India gets 24/7 power.

In conclusion, I would just like to share with you one more good news. In the new year, India has also given additional 80 MW power to Nepal. I had a conversation with the Minister of Power from Nepal on the eve of the New Year and on his request the government of India has provided 80 MW additional power. And for a country of the size of Nepal and the consumption level of Nepal, that's a very significant amount of power. It will help a large part of Nepal go into 24/7 assured power. I give greetings to the people of Nepal on this happy occasion and I am delighted that we are working in partnership with Nepal to see how more and more power can flow to our neighboring states, neighboring countries like Nepal, like Bangladesh, like Bhutan and Myanmar. So our collective effort of all the various stakeholders in this sector have helped us not only meet the needs of the people of India, convert India to a power surplus country but now also become a supplier of power and an enabler for the entire region.

My compliments to the entire team here. I wish you well in the New Year. I wish all of you and your families a wonderful New Year. And I am sure, this year will be a year of rapid strides both in the fast implementation of the various programs of the Ministries – Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines, but will also be a year of greater transparency, year of greater citizen engagement, a year of greater citizen satisfaction, and a year in which we will take, we will go to the people of India with service, better service, affordable service and service with a smile.

Thank you very much and good wishes to all of you.