

## **Power Wars**

The latest attack by US missiles on Iraqi targets has automatically meant a shortage of oil supply to India, which in no uncertain terms confirms an increase in prices of petroleum products yet again. It is amazing how petroleum controls a country's economy. Petroleum consumption is not limited to vehicular transport alone. Once petrol prices increase, transportation charges are jacked up which automatically increases the prices of all essential commodities in the consumer market, adding up to a rise in inflation.

How many times since the Gulf war (which was fought 5 years ago) have the prices of petroleum products gone up. During the Gulf war, a huge increase in petrol prices, gave the feeling that people would choose alternate modes of transport. But isn't it surprising that the consumption of petrol and number of vehicles have actually increased instead of decreasing in this period. Today we have reached a stage wherein the average man is burdened by price rise with no solution in sight. This is all due to our over dependence on petroleum.

One other area of our overdependence is in power consumption. India today is facing a severe power shortage. And there seems to be no hope of any betterment in the situation in the near future. This is where we have to restrain ourselves from expending conventional sources of energy and start using non conventional energy sources. This should start off with the average man going in for non-conventional energy sources like solar energy for his household requirements. India is self sufficient in oil production to cater to 60% of its present requirements. We should be able to balance our production with the requirements by saving fuel since the oil reserves in Gulf are expected to sustain our needs for the next 20 to 25 years only. Though constant research is going on to find alternate sources of energy to replace conventional ones, it can only happen if the common man begins to use non-conventional energy options as a first choice.

G. P. VINAY BABU  
September 1996, Technoworld