

# Weather forecast for power cos

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**KOLKATA:** Suffering from the sweltering heat? Prolonged power cuts adding to the woes? Blame it on weather forecast. If only for better weather predictions, the city's power distribution companies would have had better preparedness.

If the power generation and distribution companies such as the state-run West Bengal State Energy Distribution Corporation Limited (WBSEDCL) and the private utility CESC had prior information that the mercury would touch 40°C, they would have been able to take adequate measures to handle Kolkata's discomfort.

According to private weather forecast company Express Weather, utility companies would save on a lot of time and energy if they invested in weather forecast.

The city-based firm provides

**IF THE POWER UTILITIES HAD PRIOR INFO ABOUT THE SOARING MERCURY, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER EQUIPPED TO HANDLE KOLKATA'S DISCOMFORT**

weather forecast and related risk mitigation solutions to farmers, along with corporate firms in sectors such as insurance, energy and entertainment.

"Companies such as WBSEDCL and CESC base their power generation forecast based on calculations related to historical data. This often leads to mistakes. They should rather base their calculations on weather predictions, which are more accurate," said Express Weather's managing director and chief executive officer Angshujyoti Das.

He said that in the developed

world, energy distribution companies depend on weather forecast to decide on power supply. "If the city's power distribution companies have weather predictions beforehand for the hot and humid days, they can distribute power in a suitable manner. Since power can't be saved, they can sell excess power," said Das.

The Express Weather chief executive pointed out that it was crucial to energy generating and distribution companies to forecast how much and what kind of energy was required in short and long term. An industry insider said that present market situation required high degree of accuracy in load and consumption forecasting.

"Short-term and immediate forecasts take into account normal consumer behaviour, peak demands for electric energy, seasonal factors and weather forecasts as well as possibility of emergencies. Using all

these variables weather forecast solution companies develop variety of scenarios and apply respective energy needs to each of them," the insider said.

Sources in a leading private power utility, however, felt that the predictions used were fairly accurate, since these were dependent on understanding the local market, usage pattern and related features. "Our predictions are important since we know where the energy is going. We also receive detailed reports from the Indian meteorological department," a senior official said.

According to the industry insider, forecast is always important, particularly for the state electricity board, which mostly has overhead power lines. "They get information on storm patterns so that their poles are not uprooted. Since the private utilities have underground lines, adequate measures are already in place" he said.