

POWER GENERATION

Is there Any Light at the End of the Tunnel?

by KZ Isham

THIS write-up attempts to present the factual scenario of the electricity situation in Bangladesh. The esteemed readers can draw their own conclusion from facts and figures presented below.

Power Station Unit No. 1 & 2 Shahjibazar Power 60 Station Rehabilitation Unit No. 4, 5, 6 & 7 Total 372

First, the good news: (i) A new company for power generation named Rural Power Company (RPC) has been created which will eventually have a power generation capacity of 180 MW. Initially a 60 MW Gas Turbine Power Plant will be installed at Mymensingh with public and private equity to supply electricity exclusively to the rural areas. (ii) Meghnath Power Company, a combined cycle power plant of 300 MW capacity, will be installed at Meghnath side (22 KM south east of Dhaka) through formation of a new company independent of BPDB with private participation through solicited international bids. About 20 pre-qualification bids have been received by the Private Power Cell for this project on the closing date, 27th June 1996. (iii) Coal fired 300 MW Power Plant will be set up at Barapukuria in Dinajpur district in the public sector. The proposed Power Plant will be installed under suppliers' credit through open international bidding. (iv) A 210 MW Thermal Power Plant is proposed at Khulna under BPDB. (v) A 60 MW Gas Turbine Power Plant will be set up at Shahjibazar. (vi) Bangladesh Ministry of Energy has already signed 11 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and has also received 60 unsolicited bids for building power plants in the private sector. (vii) The latest news is that recently two foreign firms viz. Geopetrol of Canada and Unocal Corporation of USA have proposed to invest \$ 1.5 billion over the years for infrastructural development including power generation under "Western Region Integrated Project." A 225 MW combined cycle gas fired power plant is proposed after development of newly found Shahbazpur Gas Field in Bholia. (viii) The following Power Plants are actually under construction at present:

Table with 5 columns: Year (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000), Capacity, Peak Demand, Gen. Capacity, Reserve Margin, Firm Capacity, Surplus (Shortfall).

• Firm Capacity = Generation Capacity - (1st Largest + 2nd Largest + Largest GT unit Capacity).

Now the bad news: An interview with the Energy Minister was published in The Daily Star on 5th July, in which the minister was quoted to have said, "But development of all the components under the Energy Sector which includes gas, power and mineral resources, requires a lot of time. Therefore, I am afraid, nobody would see any dramatic development overnight." While the country will have an ever-growing power load shedding for the coming years, setting up of power plants to reduce the level of load shedding

would take at least three years even if work starts immediately, the minister noted. "We are currently facing load shedding of 200 MW power everyday. This level will increase. But we cannot solve this problem immediately," he said.

Presently, Bangladesh has an installed generation capacity of 2908 MW. Out of this we can speak of about 700 MW as obsolete and roughly another 500 MW as non-operational and in need of rehabilitation. A list of plants under repair has been given above. Whether commissioning of the BMR projects will be accomplished on time remains to be seen. From the countless reports and newspaper articles that we frequently read it is evident that there does not exist an accurate figure as to what is the present generation capacity of the installed plants. Let us assume that the figure may be anything between 1800 MW and 2000 MW. Presently, the estimates of our peak demand vary from 1700 MW to

legal cover for private generation in the modern day and age.

(b) Any private power operator will want the following two guarantees: i) A price per KWH for power supply and power availability. ii) Sovereign guarantee for payment of the private power operators bills.

The most likely system of supply of power will be feeding the power generated into the national grid. But the responsibility of paying for this power would fall on the shoulder of BPDB. The current level of System Loss (euphemism for power theft) estimates vary between 30 and 35 per cent. How any organisation can find the money to pay the private power operator is anybody's guess. The problem will be further compounded since the payment will have to be made in foreign exchange.

(c) A substantial number of our power users have already got accustomed to either not paying electricity bills at all or even if they pay it is very much on the lower side. With the introduction of private power, these types of consumers are really going to receive an electric shock when they have to pay the real cost of power. There is bound to be initial resistance from these consumers and meter readers alike.

Private Power Cell and Independent Power Policy

The government has undertaken Power Sector reform measures and pursuant to this a Power Cell has been created which has already started its activity to carry out various studies and preparatory works for successful implementation of the reform programme. A study has been undertaken for a comprehensive review of the present Electricity Acts and Regulations and Recommendation of Changes that will permit a free and broad participation of the private sector in the development of power. The most fundamental measures, however, will be the legal framework and for any laws to be passed in the Parliament will require political consensus which at the moment seems very illusory. The passing of laws appears to be very distant and nobody has an idea of when any of the fundamental measures will be in place for implementation.

The Power Cell has already prepared the draft of the Independent Power Policy (IPP) and has sent it to the Ministry for approval. After the approval of the IPP the Power Cell will seek solicited bids from interested private power developers. For negotiating with the bidders a high powered inter-ministerial secretary level committee is proposed. A power expert will be the chairman of this committee and the DG, PPC will act as member secretary.

Is There Any Light?

From the above scenario it can be seen that Bangladesh is

very much at the bottom of the international ladder as far as per capita power consumption is concerned. This will be below 60 KWH per capita per annum and only 14 per cent of our population has access to electricity. We read about ambitious development programmes being announced by the political parties but where the power is going to come from to sustain these programmes is not known. To maintain a reasonable growth level per annum, we need a crash programme to solve our electricity problem in the short run. We have to ask ourselves what can be done in the next 12 months, in addition to the long term programmes mentioned above. The following short term remedial measures deserve consideration:

(a) We can allow private power generation immediately in some selected areas like Dhaka and Chittagong EPZ, some industrial areas like Tongi, Narayanganj, etc.

(b) In some residential areas like Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Uttara, Dhanmondi, etc. where distribution networks already exist, power generation and distribution can be handed over to some private company on emergency tender. Between 10 and 20 MW power plants are available with short delivery dates. These can come under operation within the next 8 to 12 months. With power distribution and collection of bills with private operators there would not be any necessity of giving repayment guarantees by the government.

(c) Government should encourage import of generators duty free and supply gas and other fuel to the operators at a concessional rate.

(d) Some more areas presently under PDB control should be handed over to REB, whose operation record is considerably better.

(e) The most revolutionary measure would be that if there is even one MW of load shedding it must start with the residences of VIPs and Gulshan, Baridhara, Dhanmondi, should stop getting preferential treatment over places like Tetulia and Teknaf or other remote areas. This step is bound to bring very effective results.

The above measures, if implemented quickly, would give relief to the power generation sector of anything between 200 to 250 MW, which will go a long way towards meeting the power shortfall and increasing demand of power that is likely to come with the increased industrialisation.

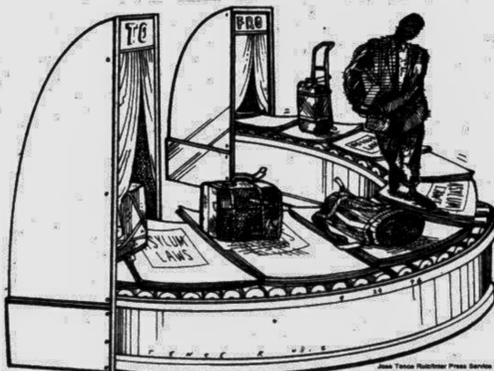
As matters stand today I do not, however, see much light at the end of the tunnel. I am looking for a generator for my home having recently installed one in my office.

The writer is a former president of the Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry.

REFUGEES

Huddled Masses Go Home

The United States and Canada are set to adopt a new policy that will make it even more difficult for refugees to seek asylum in those countries. Haider Rizvi of Inter Press Service reports from Washington.



REFUGEES fleeing their home countries because of war, political violence, or state-sponsored terrorism will find it increasingly difficult to seek asylum in the United States and Canada.

Others say the notion that the country of first arrival ought to be responsible for examining the asylum claim has been borrowed from European governments who fashioned the principle through two multilateral agreements — the Dublin Convention (1990) and the Schengen Agreement (1990).

An agreement due to be signed by officials in Washington and Ottawa imposes new restrictions on granting asylum to refugees.

The intent of the new regulation is to discourage asylum shopping by asylum applicants, says Phyllis Coven, director of the office of International Affairs at the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS).

The proposed agreement denies asylum to anyone who does not arrive directly in the country where the applicant intends to seek asylum.

These agreements were based, not on any precedents in international law, but rather (as) an expedient arrangement to ease the transition toward abolishing internal border controls. Bill Frelick, a senior policy analyst for the US Committee for Refugees writes in a recently published research paper on asylum issues.

Officials here assert that the agreement would discourage fake and fraudulent claims for asylum. They say the accord is designed to encourage applications for asylum in the country that offers the first opportunity for effective protection.

Human rights groups have documented several cases in which people were denied asylum because of the 'first arrival rule'. In one of the cases documented by the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), a Somali refugee travelling with five children was pushed out of four European countries.

But human rights groups here describe the new policy as unwarranted and are urging the two governments to refrain from signing the accord.

Belgian authorities returned them to Prague July 8. The Czech Republic sent them in turn to the Bratislava airport in Slovakia because they had in

their passport a genuine, but expired, visa allowing them to transit Slovakia.

The Slovak authorities detained the family at the airport, fed them one meal a day, while denying them access to a telephone or interpreter. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) discovered and interviewed them and found them to have a well-founded fear of persecution.

But despite UNHCR's intervention, the Slovak authorities refused to register the applicants' claim for asylum, arguing that the Somalis were tourists who had not applied for asylum. Slovakia insisted that they be deported to Ukraine, the country of first arrival.

On the night of July 25, Slovak authorities put the family on a train to Kiev. At that point, UNHCR lost track of them.

The US Committee for Refugees, Amnesty International, and several other human rights organisations campaigning against the signing of the US-Canadian agreement say the accord contravenes international standards of refugee protection.

International principles of refugee protection were codified by UNHCR, which counts the United States and Canada among its 50 member governments.

Conclusion 15 reached by UNHCR's Executive Committee says that "asylum should not be refused solely on the grounds that it could be sought from another state."

No conclusion states that the country of first arrival ought to be responsible for examining asylum claims. Rather, the Executive Committee concludes that an asylum seeker's wishes should be taken into account "as far as possible."

Frelick contends that in the case of the United States and Canada, neither country has made a convincing case that asylum shopping is a real problem.

Neither country has provided statistics to demonstrate that significant numbers of persons denied asylum in one country in fact travel to the other to apply for asylum," he says, adding that the logic behind the agreement was nothing but an attempt to find "additional countries of first arrival where they can push asylum seekers back."

According to the INS, more than 50,000 refugees applied for asylum in the United States last year, and 8,000 were granted political asylum. But, as Frelick asserts, the INS could not provide information on whether those 8,000 asylum seekers had travelled to the United States directly from their country in which they were being persecuted.

Wednesday 10th July

(All programmes are in local time. We recommend programmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the programmes)

BTV

3:00 Opening Announcement Al-Quran Programme, Summary 3:10 Recitation from the Gesta 3:15 Re-releasant of Selected Programme 4:00 News in Bangla 4:15 Sports Programme 4:45 Tagore Songs 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Moneer Katha 6:00pm News in Bangla 6:05 Hifal Tamal : Folk Songs 9:00 Mini Series: Shin Totsukawa Story (I) 10:30 News in English 10:30 Shaasthatath: Health Programme Based on Child & Mother 10:35 Prottyashar 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Thursday's programme 11:40 Close down

BBC

6:00am BBC Newsroom inc. World Business Report/Asia Today/24 Hours 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Under The Blue Flag 10:00 BBC Newsday 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Horizon 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Summer Holiday 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Time Out: Building Sights 4:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00pm BBC World News 6:15 Panorama 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 BBC Newsday Asia & Pacific 8:30 Time Out: Auction 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Under The Blue Flag 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Top Gear 11:00 The World Today 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 The Tourist 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Food and Drink 3:00 BBC World Report inc. World Business Report/24 Hours 5:00 BBC World News 5:10 Newsnight



Five Corners on Star Movies, Tonight at 9:30

7:00am Rewind VJ Sophia 8:00 Jump Start VJ Trey 9:00 Frame by Frame 12:00noon The Vibe VJ Luke 1:00 By Demand VJ Trey 2:00 Rewind VJ Sophia 3:00 The Greatest Music Party in the World 4:30 By Demand VJ Trey 5:30 Rewind VJ Sophia 6:30 The Vibe VJ Luke 7:30 First Day First Show 8:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 5:30 Speak Easy Featuring Lionel Richie 9:30 Sansui Mantra Hai 10:00 Top of the Pops 10:30 First Day First Show 11:00 Rewind VJ Sophia 11:30 The Ride VJ Trey 12:00am BPL Oye 1:00 Haysah 2:00 By Demand VJ Trey 3:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 5:00 Frame by Frame

STAR PLUS

6:30am Voltron 7:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 7:30 GI Joe 8:00 Saber Rider and the Star Sherif 8:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 9:00 Aerobics Of Style 9:30 Nanny and the Professor 10:00 Mr Belvedere 10:30 Graham Kerr's Kitchen 11:00 El TV 11:30 Gabrielle 12:30 Santa Barbara 1:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 2:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 3:00 Remington Steele 4:00 Graham Kerr's Kitchen 4:30 El TV 5:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 5:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 6:00pm Lost in Space 7:00 Home and Away 7:30 Charles in Charge 8:00 MASH 8:30

STAR Sports

6:30am Asia Sport Show 7:30 The European Tour Murphy's Irish Open Hls 8:30 The London Mara 9:30 World Windsurfing H/L 10:00 World Rally Champs Sea Review 10:30 World Bowls Championships 1996 From Adelaide, Australia 12:30 The European Tour Murphy's Irish Open Hls 1:30 1996 Omega Spelling Magazine 2:30 Trans World Sport 3:30 Live Cricket 96' Natwest Trophy Round 2 6:00 Natwest Trophy Round 2 6:00 Asia Sport 6:30 Live Cricket 96' Natwest Trophy Round 2 1:30 World Bowls Championships 1996 From

STAR MOVIES

7:30am Comedy: Spider And Rose 18 (Arabic Subtitles): 9:30 Family: Super Grand Prix PG (Arabic Subtitles): 11:30 Family: Dominic and Eugene (Hindi Subtitles): 1:30 Adventure: Florida Straits 15 (Hindi Subtitles): 3:30 Comedy: Ulo Carle PG (Hindi Subtitles): 5:30 Classic: Made For Each Other PG (Hindi Subtitles): 7:15 The Preview 7:30 Jodie Foster Double Bill: Little Man Tate PG (Hindi Subtitles): 9:00 The Movie Show 9:30 Jodie Foster Double Bill: Five Corners 18 (Hindi Subtitles): 11:30 Samuel Fuller Week: Hell And High Water 127 (Arabic Subtitles): 1:30 Film Club: The Lonely Passion Of Judith Hearne 18 (Arabic Subtitles): 3:30 Action: Predator II 18 (Arabic Subtitles): 5:30 After Dark Segns 18 (Arabic Subtitles):

ZEE TV

6:00 News 6:30 Jagran 7:00 A To Z of Computer: The Management Course 8:30 Through The Gear 9:00 Helpline 9:30 Gaane Anyane 10:00 Lakme Khubsurat 10:30 Duniya 11:00 Its My Show 11:30 Hum Paanch 12:00 TBA 12:30 Sur Taal 1:00 A To Z of Computer 2:30 Tera 3:00 Film Chakkar 3:30 Celeste 4:00 Bhejanes 4:30 Positive Health Show 5:00 A To Z of Computer 5:30 Hum Zameen 6:00 Cartoon 6:30 All Out 7:00 Khana Khazana 7:30 Gaane Anyane 8:00 Ek Minute 8:30 Mh Minto 9:00 17 Sharfy Road 9:30 Bangy Apni Baat 10:00 Pampara 10:30 The News & Business Roundup 11:00 The Dream Merchants 11:30 Aap Ki Adalat 12:00 Saahab 12:30 Campus 1:00 Has rations 1:30 Film Deewane 2:00 Same Same Tring Tring 2:30 Zee Arabia Infotainment (TMM)

PTV

8:00am Titawat Aar Tarjuma

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

4:00 Superman 4:30 Home And Away 5:00 The Sullivans 5:30 Gabrielle

Adelaide, Australia 2:30 The European Tour Murphy's Irish Open Hls 3:30 24 Hours Of Le Mans 1996 5:00 Live Cricket 96' Natwest Trophy Round 2

Hand/Nast 8:20 Cartoon 8:30 Khabran 8:45 Mansobajart Barzi Khud Kalifat 9:00 Sur Savaria & Sehra Ka Safer & Sada-E-Kasme 9:40 Shana Ba Shana 9:50 Aaj Ki Kitaab-Aik Nazm 10:05 Boor Kay Ladoo 10:30 English Film: Chip And Dale 10:55 Milli Naghma 11:00 Khabran 11:10 Ali Baba (Drama Serial) 11:35 Naghmazar (Drama Serial) 12:00noon Urdu Khaal 12:55 Quraan-e-Hakeem 1:02 Bismillah 1:15 Gichan (Drama Serial) 2:00 Inteha (Drama Serial) 2:50 The Earth Revealed 3:20 Arashi Puda 3:40 Natural World 4:35 How Things Work 5:00 Yeh Munk In'Yae 5:25 Hamara Sehat 5:55 Kitab Qaz 6:25 Abu Cousins 7:00 Tararum 7:05 Felix The Cat

7:30 Such Cup 7:45 English News 8:00 Marvin Gold Raceday 8:25 Jagan Ran 8:55 PTV Gold 9:00 Break for Headline News 9:20 Aap Ki Awaraz Maqsood 10:00 Khabran & Commercial News 11:00 Tes Aastman 12:00 NYPD Blue 12:45 Khas Khabran (Close down)

8:30 Rangela Re 9:00 The Three Stooges 9:30 Dennis The Menace 10:00 Dream Of Jeannie 10:30 Aama 11:00 Faastee 11:30 Cine Matinee-Hindi Feature Film 2:30pm Kismet 3:00 Zameen Aaman 3:30 Mere Message Meri Geet 4:00 Surf Wheel Of Fortune 4:30 Ghaav 5:00 Sunday Ki Sunday 5:30 The

Three Stooges 6:00 Dennis The Menace 6:30 Dream Of Jeannie 7:00 Mere Message Meri Geet 7:30 Premier 8:00 Surf Wheel Of Fortune 8:30 Faastee 9:00 Ghaav 9:30 O'Mara 10:00 Jinee Kaha Mera Jigar Gaya Ji 10:30 Cine Prime Hindi Feature Film 1:30pm Mere Message Meri Geet 2:00 Rangela Re 2:30 Closed

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DD 7

8:00am Janmadin 8:10 Rabindra Sangeet 8:20 Binodan 8:30 Sandhan/Chakri Khabar 8:50 Adhunik Gaan 9:00 Bakul Basar 9:30 Irsha 11:00 Shastriya Sangeet 10:15 Bhaktigeet 12:30pm Chalti Hawa 1:00 Janani (Serial) 1:30 Bengali

EL TV

06:00 Dance Dance 07:00 Best of the Best 08:00 Taranne Aur Fasane 09:00 Music Time 10:00 Tarannum 10:30 Dance Mama 11:00 V 3 plus 11:30 Karam 12:00 Special 3:00 Film Cha A'i 3:30 Kal Bh Aaj Bh 4:00 Ziro Se

ZEE CINEMA

8:30 Tarana 9:00 Hit Hai Fit Hai 9:30 Film 12:15 Anabam 12:45 Film 3:30 Aaj Anadi Kal Khadi 4:00 Film 6:45 Film 9:30 Songs 10:00 Film 12:15 Off Screen 12:45 Film

TOM and JERRY



James Bond

