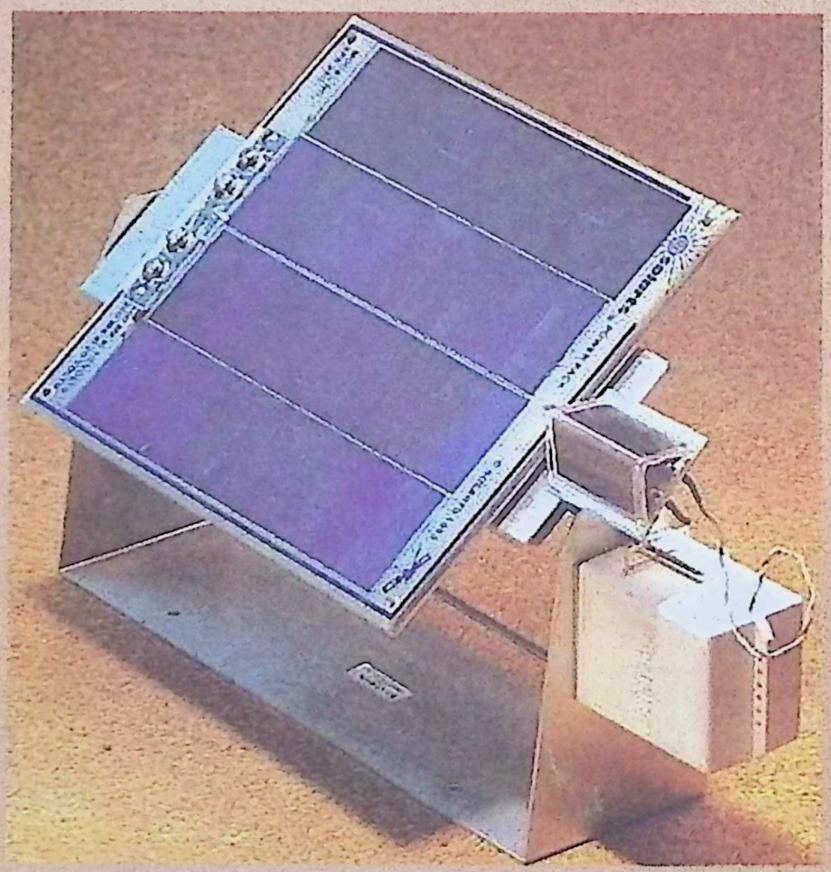
Power Sector of Bangladesh

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POWER is the key to the economic growth of any country. The necessity of power is only known when load-shedding occurs. Though rural life of Bangladesh is not totally dependent on power, urban life cannot sustain without electricity. At present we have production of around 4000 MW electricity and the shortage is around 2000 MW. This demand is ever on the increase. In 2020, the national demand for electricity will rise to around 8000 MW. The reality is, this situation cannot be improved just by installing some high capacity generation units overnight. Because, for installing a medium scale 300-400 MW power plant will need a time frame of around 3-7 years. The main constraints are finance, technology and inadequacy of natural resources. The main fuel used for electricity production in Bangladesh is gas, which now accounts for around 80% of the power production. The reserve of gas is depleting fast and may last for around 10-20 years. Though we have a reserve of coal to last for a longer period of time, the state of coal mining is not feasible because of the fact that commercial coal mining process requires more than five years to finalize.

Under these circumstances, we should create a master plan to increase the production of electricity or else because of the uncertainty of adequate power supply, domestic and foreign investment will decrease. As a result, economic and industrial growth will be stalled. One example is garments sector, which earns around 75% of the total foreign currency, experienced a fall of production of around 30%, due to power outage. Lack of visionary policy by Bangladesh Government to increase power production will create problem in the near future.



As a consequence, we have to immediately shift our concentration to alternative fuel source on an urgent basis; otherwise power outage will cripple the economic growth in Bangladesh. But recently the ray of hope arises as in 2007 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) gave permission to Bangladesh for installing Nuclear Power Plant.

On May 2009, Bangladesh signed an agreement with Russia, for assistance in the development of nuclear energy infrastructure in Bangladesh. This deal may encourage Bangladesh to set up more nuclear power plants in near future. Funds for the nuclear power plants will be sought through soft term loans from international donors.

Other concerns that should be properly taken care of is the safety features, environmental and water pollution and radioactive waste management.

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