Editor's Note

WITH load-shedding a now daily (actually, several times a day) occurrence and industry dangerously close to the brink as a result of the nation's chronic lack of power, there is no getting away from the fact that Bangladesh is in the midst of our worst energy crisis in a generation.

It is not merely a question of comfort and convenience. When students do not have light to study by and hospitals do not have power to run life-saving machines and when farmers are unable to operate their irrigation pumps and when industry must run far below capacity due to power constraints, then there is no getting away from the fact that the matter has reached crisis point.

How did we get here, what needs to be done, and most importantly, is what needs to be done to resolve the problem being done?

The Bangladeshi people are both patient and prudent. They understand that the roots of the power crisis lie in the omissions of previous governments, and that such a long-standing crisis cannot be resolved overnight. They have been patient and have been willing to give the government the time that it needs to resolve the crisis.

Well, it is now 15 months that the government has been in power. The question is: how well have these 15 months been utilised? It is true that the government could not have fully resolved the crisis within the time it has had so far, but the simple truth is that we are nowhere near where we need to be and the crisis (our demand for power) is growing worse every day.

The ball is fully in the government's court. It has wasted the best part of 15 months and the challenges ahead are immense. However, all is not yet lost, and there is still time for it to find a solution to the crisis if the government takes bold and decisive action.

Such bold and decisive action will require not merely sound decision-making when it comes to building or renting new power plants, but also politically risky decisions such as green-lighting coal and gas exploration and visionary gambits such as promotion of solar and other renewable energy sources.

However, more than just tough and tough-minded decision-making, more important is delivery. The problem has been in the decision-making process, but even more than this, in the implementation. This apparent inability to implement its policies, more than anything else, is what needs resolution. And the hour is getting late.

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