expressed her unhappiness about the implementation of power projects.

Since 2009, different government agencies floated tenders for power projects totaling more than 3,000 MW. If the agencies could handle these bids efficiently, by now the majority of these projects would have been awarded to different contractors and it would have assured that at least by 2011, some of these projects would have started producing power. That would have meant that by 2011, the level of load-shedding would have decreased significantly -- if not completely.

But that is not happening because so far the government could sign only two public sector power projects of 300 MW each and four rental power projects of 300 MW each. And the government's plans to urgently increase power generation by this summer have failed miserably.

Unfortunately, as it has turned out, the government's implementation skills have proven to be pathetic.

The power ministry has now resorted to unsolicited deals and contracts with competent international rental power companies. If this on-going initiative is reasonably successful, these unsolicited deals may add another 200 to 600 MW power within the year.

Of the remaining two dozen plus power tenders, six power projects totaling 1,400 MW could not make much progress although they were floated about a year back. One for 300 MW is now set for a re-tender. Officials now say that the remaining projects will make headway soon, but analysts say the government will take the whole year simply to complete the tendering processes.

Of the remaining projects, the PDB's bid for ten public sector power projects totaling 810 MW capacity was partially successful as the government is set to sign contracts for seven out of these ten projects -- assuring the generation of 500 MW within the next 30 months.

Besides these, the PDB has floated tenders for five private power projects totaling a maximum of 1,275 megawatts. The initial response for the projects was very encouraging.

While so many projects are being floated by different government agencies, the power scenario has turned from bad to worse. The load-shedding situation is affecting everyone hard as the power supply is now being disrupted in alternate hours and even late at night.

Industrial production has also been affected. The power crisis has become a serious political issue for the government. Whereas the people in 2009 were forgiving about the government not being able to supply adequate power, they are no longer so forgiving this time around. After all, the government is now 14 months old.

Top officials of the power board and the ministry admit disappointing progress with some power projects. But they claim the nation will see a series of power agreements soon. In the next one month, a top official of PDB says, the government will sign different agreements totaling 1,000 MW power capacity. By the end of this year, more power deals totaling more than 4,000 MW would be signed as well.

If that happens, it would surely be a huge achievement for a country like Bangladesh that now produces 4,000 to 4,600 MW power against a demand of 6,000 MW to 6,200 MW.

One official I spoke with for this story explained why some tenders could not make progress as was expected. "Firstly, we produce only 4,000-4,500 MW power, but we have four different agencies floating power tenders. Except for the PDB, all other agencies lack expertise and experience to deal with tenders.

"The creation of so many agencies for power generation was a wrong idea and assigning them to float tenders was an even worse idea," said the official. "You can see that only the tenders floated by the PDB have made some progress. Other agencies are far behind with their tenders."