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INTEGRATED ENERGY, POWER PLAN

Renewables ignored, coal, LNG favoured

CPD says projections of power demand based on lofty growth predictions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) has some positive aspects but ignored renewable energy and favoured expensive Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and coal.

It projects very high electricity demand in 2040-2050 based on ambitious growth forecasts, which are sometimes made out of "political biases", said the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

Tokyo-based consulting firm Institute of Energy Economics has been working on the IEPMP following an agreement between the Bangladesh government and Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) in March last year.

CPD RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ IEPMP should emphasise more on gas exploration
- ✓ Govt should look for foreign financiers, investors for renewables
- ✓ Solar irrigation system should be implemented
- ✓ Solar panels should be installed on school roofs
- ✓ Retiring fossil-fuel based plants should not be kept in service

Jica was supposed to complete the formulation of the IEPMP by December this year. The master plan would be complete by March 2023.

"We found that in some cases, the report mentioned coal as clean energy after using carbon capture technology which is absolutely unacceptable," said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of CPD while addressing a media event titled "Draft IEPMP: Can it Achieve Clean Energy Targets?" at the CPD office in Dhanmondi yesterday.

He said the draft assumed that Bangladesh would be a rich country by 2041 and the per capita income would be \$12,000. It projected power demand to be over 90,000MW by 2050.

"Such a highly ambitious target may be political and the government should backtrack and the master plan should include a mid-term targets," he said.

It is also "suspicious" that the government has moved away from its stance of not mining coal in the country, he said.

The CPD study found that the draft emphasised on gas-fired plants but did not mention the potential of local gas. The government wants to build a "power hub" in the south which would be mainly LNG-based.

"It should be based on renewables," said Moazzem. He said the government should keep its eyes on the commitment of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and 40 percent renewable power sources by 2041.

"Forty percent of 90,000MW is 36,000MW which will be impossible [to generate]. But if the master plan sets the demand at 45,000MW, the renewable portion will be 16,000MW, a more realistic target," he said.

Currently, the country has 60 percent overcapacity which is burdening the government with capacity payments, the CPD said.

Moazzem also disapproved of the notion of hiking power prices by withdrawing subsidies. The government should rather go for a plan to retire expensive rental and quick rental power plants and reduce the cost of power generation, he said.

He also said the draft plan did not talk about energy costs.

Referring to the interim report of the plan, Moazzem said if Bangladesh invested in renewables, per unit electricity cost would be only 2 cents in 2050 while the cost of gas-fired power would be Tk 6.2 cents, coal-fired 4.7 cents, nuclear 5.3 cents, ammonia-based 17 cents, hydrogen 14 cents, and LNG would be 8.4 cents.

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Vegetable farmers rinsing their stocks of different kinds of spinach with the contaminated waters of the Dhaleshwari in Savar's Bank Town area. The water is considered poisonous due to the dumping of chemical wastes from nearby factories. Consuming this spinach, which is sent to the capital's Amin Bazar, may cause severe health complications, including cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery and even jaundice.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS

The old and vulnerable bearing the brunt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Because of rapidly increasing temperatures, heat-related deaths of vulnerable people, especially those aged over 65, has increased by 148 percent in Bangladesh in just two decades.

The Lancet, one of the world's leading medical journals, revealed this during the Bangladesh launch of 2022 Global Report of the Lancet Countdown.

The researchers compared the heat-related mortality rates between 2000-2004 and 2017-2021.

Compared to the 1986-2005 baseline, summer temperature increased 0.49C in 2021, which was significantly higher than the 0.09C increase in 2000.

Bangladesh experienced 1.7 months of drought from 2012-2021, considerably higher than the 1951-1960 average of only 0.3 months, said the report.

The temperature rise is affecting the spread of infectious diseases, putting populations at higher risk of emerging diseases and co-epidemics.

"Such exposure to extremes of heat results in

a range of health consequences, including heat stress and heat stroke, worsening heart disease, and acute kidney injury and leads to an increase in all-cause mortality," said Shouro Dasgupta, the only Bangladeshi who co-authored the report.

In Bangladesh last year, 15,970 million potential work hours were lost in agriculture, 3,300 million in construction, and 2,400 million in manufacturing sectors, according to the report.

Climate change will likely increase the frequency of vector borne diseases like Dengue and Malaria in the future, he said while highlighting the Bangladesh-specific findings of the report yesterday at a discussion at the Child Health Research Foundation in the capital.

Launched globally on October 26 this year, the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change was produced by 99 experts from

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How could they dream of power?

Says PM referring to BNP's rout in 2008 national election

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has wondered how the BNP could dream of returning to power after the BNP-Jamaat alliance got only 30 seats in 2008 general election that was accepted by all.

She made the comment while presiding over a meeting of the Awami League Working Committee (ALWC) at the Gono Bhaban yesterday evening, reports BSS.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, said none could raise any question about the 2008 general election.

She said the AL-led grand alliance achieved a landslide victory in that polls.

The PM come down heavily on a section of intellectuals, saying that elections expose their conspiratorial side, reports UNB.

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12 parties forge new alliance

BNP-led 20-party combine 'dissolved'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve political parties of the BNP-led 20-party combine have formed a new alliance to conduct a movement alongside the BNP and realise the 10-point demand that include national polls under a caretaker government.

Mostafa Jamal Haidar, chairman of a faction of Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), made the declaration during a press briefing at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The announcement comes after the silent dissolution of the 20-party alliance.

"Our understanding and unity with the biggest opposition party of the country, BNP, will remain the same as before. We are moving forward with the new strategy to build a greater unity with the participation of the political parties that are against

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A huge boat-shaped stage has been built at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan ahead of the ruling Awami League's 22nd National Council tomorrow. Party leaders across the country will join the triennial council.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

No possibility of holding talks with BNP

CEC says about further dialogue on next nat'l polls

STAR REPORT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal said there is no further scope for a dialogue with the BNP or any other political party regarding the next parliamentary election.

He made the remark at a views-exchange meeting with government officials at the deputy commissioner's office in Patuakhali yesterday.

He also said the BNP was requested many times to participate in the dialogue on the next parliamentary election, but the party rejected those.

"They are adamant in their demand for a non-partisan government and the reformation of the election commission," he added.

However, during dialogues with the EC and at various recent events, several former CECs, election commissioners, and experts opined that the commission must hold discussions with all political parties to ensure their participation in the next national polls.

At a programme in the capital on Wednesday, former CEC Mohammad Abu Hena said everyone expects a participatory election.

"Only urging all to join the election is not enough ... Create that confidence [for them] through your [EC's]

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