



Now coal power plants scaling back production

People in rural areas suffer as fuel shortage hits generation

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Coal-fired power plants are dialling down production or even shutting down due to financial, legal or technical issues, leading to power cuts across the country, especially in the rural areas.

Gas-fired power producers have already been in this state since June. The country's seven coal-based power plants, with a combined capacity of 7,099 megawatts (MW), are producing around 3,199MW. India's Adani Power Jharkhand Ltd, the single largest power source of Bangladesh, halved its supply last week. Bangladesh owes it about \$846 million.

On October 24, Matarbari 1,200MW Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Plant ran out of coal, according to the data of Power Grid Bangladesh PLC. It was running at half its capacity for the previous couple of weeks.

Officials said it may not be possible to restart the plant before December.

"Coal procurement process is underway. We hope that the power production will be restarted when the coal arrives in mid-December," said Md Adnan Ibrahim, executive engineer (procurement) of Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Ltd.

He said his company has floated tenders for procuring around 3.5 million tonnes of coal. The plant needs around 10,000 tonnes a day.

Ibrahim said a change of coal supplier sparked legal issues that caused delays in purchasing coal.

The Barishal 307MW power plant, meanwhile, is down for maintenance, according to the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB).

Rampal and SS Power have been producing at half their capacities for a long time due to coal shortage.

A source at the PDB said the plants are running low on coal and producing less electricity mainly due to dollar crunch.

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Around a decade ago, illegal establishments built by encroachers lined the banks of the Shitalakkhya. However, a government initiative to build a 52-km walkway on the sides of the Buriganga, Shitalakkhya and Balu rivers has changed the entire outlook of the spot as encroachers are now unable to grab the banks to build any structures. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Harris, Trump run toe to toe

75m people already cast early ballots

AFP, Gastonia

Kamala Harris and Donald Trump duelled across the swing states yesterday in the tensest US election of modern times, with the Democrat urging voters to "turn the page" on the Republican's scorched-earth brand of politics.

Seventy-five million people have already cast early ballots as the hours tick down to the Election Day climax tomorrow.

The country -- and the world -- could then face a nail-biting wait to know whether Harris becomes the first US woman president or Trump secures a spectacular return to power after his unprecedented and at times violent campaign to overturn his 2020 reelection loss to

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
TOMORROW

Joe Biden.

The rivals literally crossed paths, with Harris's official vice presidential Air Force Two and Trump's personal jet sharing the airport tarmac in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Both held rallies in North Carolina, while Harris also spoke to supporters in Georgia, another of the seven swing states seen as the keys to victory in an otherwise dead-even nationwide contest. Trump added in a stop in Virginia.

The rounds of high-stakes speeches before thousands of people at each stop were due to continue yesterday when Harris was due to hold multiple events in the swing state of Michigan and Trump

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Admin was hostage to politicians

Debapriya says after meeting bureaucrats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians aided by loyal bureaucrats were behind irregularities in development projects taken and implemented when the Awami League was in power, secretaries and other officials told a whistleblower panel.

"The administration was hostage to politics," Debapriya Bhattacharya, chief of the panel, told reporters after a meeting yesterday.

The interim government formed the panel to prepare a whitepaper on the state of the economy.

The panel yesterday consulted the high-level government officials at the planning ministry.



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Don't think about 'minus 2 formula' again: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday warned that no one should think of the so-called "minus two formula" again or engage in any actions excluding the party as part of a plot.

Speaking at a memorial meeting, he said there were failed attempts to depoliticise and implement the "minus two formula" during the 1/11 political changeover of 2007.



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