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U.P. power crisis deepens

Power cuts as long as 8 hours rampant in several towns

- *Emergency plan put in place in at least 40 towns*
- *Northern Grid once again came near to collapse last evening*
- *Power supply just four hours a day in rural areas*
- *Agitated people came out on the streets at several places*

Lucknow: Normal life has been crippled following massive power cuts in Uttar Pradesh affecting major towns like State capital Lucknow, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Bareilly, Agra and Noida to a great extent in the wake of unprecedented power crunch in the State.

An emergency plan had to be put in place in at least 40 towns of the State in view of the imminent danger to the Northern Grid which once again had come near to collapse last evening as about a month long power crisis continued to haunt the officials and 17 crore people of Uttar Pradesh.

In rural areas, the power supply was just four hours a day even as the urban towns are not getting power more than 14 hours a day, according to the reports reaching here at the state headquarters. Agitated people have come on the streets at several places protesting against the erratic power supply but the authorities remain helpless as the State-owned units and the Centrally-owned NTPC units were performing below par thus putting pressure on the Northern Grid to a larger extent.

According to UP Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) sources, the dismal scenario was not likely to improve soon as several NTPC

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units were out of steam and the generation by State thermal power units was much below the required level.

In U.P. where the power demand is touching 6900 MW, the power cut to the tune of 2000 MW is just too much for the residents.

The power situation, which started worsening even before the onset of summers, is going to get tough as mercury is soaring and demand is perpetually northwards.

The Northern Grid, which caters power to nine States, is under severe stress with its frequency hovering around 48 Hz, an alarming level.

This is mainly due to its contributors lacking in generating adequate power and withdrawal by needy States, including Uttar Pradesh, exceeding the limits.

There have been several occasions in recent past that Northern Grid was on the verge of collapse, but the situation could be saved only by massive power cuts.

There is no improvement in sight as two 500 Mw units one each at Singrauli and Rihand are out for about a month -- the former due to overhauling, while the latter due to problem in its excitation, the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) sources told UNI here.

Another 110 Mw unit at Tanda Thermal Station is also not working adding to the power woes.

The availability to U.P. is more hampered as the State has the largest share -- 35-40 per cent -- from the Central sector from these NTPC units.

The performance of UP thermal units is even worse with generation at hardly 1,900 Mw against the installed capacity of more than 4,000 Mw and peak hour demand touching 7,000 Mw, a rather bleak scenario.

Almost the entire State had to face power constraint, which has affected normal life to a great deal with many places having witnessed public showdown to protest erratic power supply in urban and rural areas alike.

According to UPPCL sources, U.P. was forced to buy 'costlier' power from Centre under the present circumstances.

Uttar Pradesh is normally authorised to withdraw 2,300 Mw of power from the Central sector and it has to pay extra if withdraws

more than that.

The UPPCL had to withdraw about 2,900 Mw of power from the Central sector yesterday against its normal quota of about 2,300 Mw.

The State, with many thermal power stations at its disposal, has installed capacity of 4,607 Mw which includes 4,092 Mw thermal and 515 Mw hydro power. Obra thermal power station has 13 units with the total capacity of 1550 Mw, Paricha has 220 Mw.

Anpara `A' station has capacity of 630 Mw while Anpara `B' has 1,000 Mw of installed capacity. Similarly, Harduaganj `B' has installed capacity of 210 Mw, while Harduaganj `C' has 230 Mw and Panki has combined capacity of 252 Mw.

In Hydel, Obra hydro has installed capacity of 99 Mw, Khari has 72 Mw, Matatila 44 Mw and Rihand has capacity of 300 Mw. --
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