

Industries Feel The Heat of Power Cuts

BESCOM plans to announce schedule for load-shedding soon

by Nitindra Bandyopadhyay

Bengaluru: The Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd (BESCOM) will soon release a load-shedding schedule for domestic areas to cope with power shortage.

The power generation in the state has taken a hit following the weak monsoon and technical snags in thermal power plants.

BESCOM managing director Pankaj Kumar Pandey said, "There will be power cuts for an hour in the mornings and an hour in the evenings, schedules for which will be announced shortly. The engineers at Udupi Power Corporation Ltd (UPCL) are trying to revive the power station."

According to the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) guidelines, electricity supply companies (ESCOMS) are required to notify consumers about load shedding under Section 23 of the Electricity Act, 2003.

"If the Udupi power station is fixed, we will get 1,500 MW and the duration of power cuts will be reduced. We are waiting for the UPCL authorities to get back to us. After that, BESCOM will announce the power cut sched-



ule in the city," Pandey said. However, industrialists are complaining that ESCOMs have failed to inform the industrial consumers about the power situation due to which they are incurring heavy losses.

Federation Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI), Energy Commission, chairman M G Prabhakar said, "We have approached the KERC and asked it to direct the ESCOMs to divulge advance information of load shedding and enforce its guidelines, but no such effort has been initiated."

On the other hand, BESCOM claims to have sufficient power, but constant load shedding have taken a toll on the foundry industry and continuous processing plants, he said.

The issue of ESCOMs cur-

tailoring power from the industrial consumers to maintain power in the domestic areas without prior notice has been brought before the KERC twice, once in 2010 and again in 2011.

The complaint filed with the KERC on August 11, 2011, was against the BESCOM. In both cases, the commission found power distribution companies at fault, and had directed them to stop such practices. But refusing to learn from their previous mistakes, the power companies have again faltered the commission by not complying with its orders.

Prabhakar said, "Metal and plastic industries are the worst affected and I have received a lot of calls from industrialists who are incurring both production and financial losses from incessant power cuts. If the ESCOMs issue an advance load shedding protocol, such losses can be minimised."

The industrialists are of the view that the power distribution companies "have handled the situation in the worst manner possible." Despite poor power generation in the state, "the ESCOMs have taken zero effort to inform the consumers about the situation."

OUT OF POWER Erratic Supply Is Here To Stay As Dark Age Dawns On Karnataka

For these homecare patients, a matter of life and death

Sreemoyee Chatterjee
@timesgroup.com

Lakshmidevi, 75, an acute asthma patient, breathes through an electronic oxygen cylinder. But erratic power supply has left this Malleshwaram resident on tenterhooks.

"If there is a prolonged power cut, we are left with no option but to shift her to hospital," her son Ramesh told TOI.

"My mother is an acute patient of obstructive pulmonary disorder and both her lungs have suffered permanent irreversible damage, due to years of chronic asthma. She has to constantly depend on electricity for the oxygen cylinder to function. She cannot survive without external supply of oxygen for even 10 minutes," he explained.

Despite having installed UPS that supplies power for eight hours during power cuts, Lakshmidevi's son constantly worries about his mother's health. "Against its high cost, we have to keep stocks of artificial oxygen cylinders at home to avoid any health risk, in case of a prolonged power cut. Or we may have to pay the price with my mother's life," he added.

Many geriatric patients who avail of home care treatment facilities too depend on electricity. Frequent and prolonged power cuts mean treatment ceases for that period of time, and could up the risk factor or result in an emergency.

"My husband survives in an electrically charged ventilator suction machine and oxygen concentrator at home. Power cuts are a major threat to us as they could put his life at risk," said Radha (name changed), a resident of HAL 3rd Stage, whose husband suffers respiratory failure and related heart problems.

"Artificial cylinders are very costly and UPS batteries don't provide enough backup. It is really difficult to suddenly shift him to hospital if there is a power crisis. But we have no other option," she added.

The situation is no different for Poojamma Banerjee, 75, a resident of Dollars Colony and Subhashana Rajgopala, 78, from Sarjapur, both patients of acute lung disorder and susceptible to lung-related infections, who have to depend on electronic oxygen cylinders.

Sourya Banerjee, Poojamma's grandson, said, "Although we have enough backup, prolonged power cuts might be risky for my grandmother as she cannot survive without external oxygen for long."

DEFUNCT HELPLINE

Residents of Rajarajeshwari Nagar, putting up with extensive power cuts over the past few days, say they cannot reach Beacom on its helpline 1812. With little information on the length of the power cut, they have reached the end of their tether.

Pranika Baliga, a resident of Ideal Homes, said, "Yesterday, we had power cuts twice, once in the morning for two hours and again in the evening for one-and-a-half hours. We had a two-hour power cut in the morning again." Beacom officials did not respond to calls from TOI.



IN THE DARK (Clockwise from above) Handwork by candlelight is a common phenomenon in many homes in Bengaluru; High-mast lights blaze during the day; Businesses run on generators



It's getting embarrassing working from home

Aparajita Ray @timesgroup.com

Professionals who log in to work from home in a city where commuting is a nightmare, are battling a new problem, random power cuts. Those affected by Beacom's vagaries are techies, corporates and startup entrepreneurs.

Erratic power supply gives Chander Pal, an entrepreneur in Northchall, the headache. "I have a 28-member team and we have small power backup systems. When there are long hours of power cuts, my team sits idle and incurs heavy losses, besides disturbing clients. My work hours keep stretching. Although my apartment has power backup, it isn't for long. When I have to make internet calls and join 10 or more stakeholders, I get cut off, which irritates everybody," he said.

Women employees who relish the idea of working from home are giving this option the rethink. Sukanya Bakshi, employed with a startup, says, "It is definitely easy to work from home. I could attend to household work and finish a couple of assignments or set up a conference call from home via the internet. But now taking these meetings calls from home seems very difficult because when power snags, the call hangs and disturbs the conversation."

This is not perfectable or work. We don't have power backup in my apartment which means working from home is full of risks."

Neha Singh (name changed), consultant with an MNC, says, "I often log in at home to manage work and household responsibilities. But when I'm on call with clients, senior colleagues or directors over Skype and the call hangs due to power disruption, it is embarrassing." The JP Nagar resident has begun staying late in office to finish her calls and meetings before heading home.



HOT AND DARK

2 hour of power cuts in Bengaluru, 6-8 hour cuts in districts	10,188 MW Power generation capacity of state, but unable to generate 6,500 to 7,300 MW	50% Capital Bengaluru consumes 56% of energy generated - about 31,000 million units	Due to poor rainfall , reservoirs are running near dry, affecting hydro power generation
--	---	--	---

TIMES VIEW

Faced with drought and dwindling power reserves, Karnataka must now brace for a tough year ahead. While Bengaluru can consider itself lucky to get away with a few hours of power cuts a day, it's the rural areas that will bear the brunt, as usual. But things need not have come to such a pass: instead of unlimited supply in the run-up to 2019 elections, the government ought to have been prudent. It also needs to have a contingency plan in place for such times. It's still not too late curbing down usage in government offices and encouraging solar power generation with good incentives could help tide over the crisis.

Households grind to a halt, and children stop studying

Sreemoyee Chatterjee
@timesgroup.com

These women are not really enthused by the promise of a candlelight dinner. For them and their children, erratic power supply only means their schedules in total disarray.

Households largely dependent on electric induction stoves have a tough time ahead. Sumashta Hegde, a resident of Koteswaram, has to go hungry during extended power cuts in the area.

"I use an induction stove that runs on electricity. There have been instances when I had to skip breakfast and dinner due to power cuts in the morning and evening. At times, I've starved till I reached my office canteen. Induction is convenient for me to use, but due to frequent power cuts in my area, I have to either skip my meals or abruptly stop in the middle of cooking," she says.

Rekha Ganesha, a teacher living in Sarjapur, says her tale of woe which stretches from morning to evening. Rekha, a mother of two young kids whose family includes three senior members, said, "I have to manage both my family and school. With power cuts, my household chores get delayed. The refrigerator and mixer don't work. At times, I can't give the kids and elders fresh food."

Riya Ghosh, a student from Kundalahalli, said, "I cook once in two days and store it in the fridge as I have a hectic schedule. I depend largely on the refrigerator, but when power cuts last long hours, the food grows stale. They also hamper my studies."

Seema Kulkarni, a resident of Kodigehalli and a mother of two, said, "My children require hot water for their morning shower. Most of the time, the geyser does not work and my children have to skip their shower. Although my apartment has a generator, geyser and induction stoves are not charged by backup power."

Page 1
DH 02/09/15

Strike may hit key services today

BMS pullout could lessen impact

NEW DELHI: The nationwide strike called by 10 central trade unions on Wednesday against the anti-labour policies of the Union government is likely to impact essential services across the nation.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, an RSS affiliate, however, walked out at the last moment.

The strike may hit work at government offices, post offices, banking sector, flights and also supply of gas and other services. Since many state-level unions have joined in, power supply could also be affected in some parts of the country.

The railways, however, will not participate in the strike and some special services like supply of dairy products, fire and ambulance services have been exempted.

In City: Off

- BMTC, KSRTC buses
- Autorickshaws
- Most private schools
- Nationalised banks and post offices

Govt schools to decide depending on situation

...and on

- Taxis
- Petrol bunk
- Cinemas
- Restaurants

Details, Page 5

The trade unions remained active on Tuesday to ensure a big success even as Minister of State for Labour and Employment Bandaru Dattatreya wrote a letter asking them to reconsider their decision.

Dattatreya claimed that there was consensus on 9 of the 12 demands, but the trade unions rejected the claim. "The government did not offer any tangible solution," said AITUC president Gurudas Dasgupta.

Their demands include containing price-rise and unemployment, strict enforcement

of all basic labour laws and end to FDI in railways, insurance and defence sector.

The trade unions also want universal social security cover for all workers, minimum wages of not less than Rs 15,000 per month, enhanced pension of not less than Rs 3,000 per month, removal of all ceilings on payment and eligibility of bonus and provident fund, increase in the quantum of gratuity and compulsory registration of trade unions within a period of 45 days.

* Strike, Page 8

Page 1
DH 02/09/15

The New Indian Express 02/09/15 ₹24K Cr Thermal Project in TN

Chennai: With a view to make Tamil Nadu self-sufficient in power generation, Chief Minister J Jayalithaa on Tuesday announced that an ultra mega thermal power project to generate 4,000 MW will be set up at Nallampatti village of Ramanathapuram district. This will cost the state's exchequer ₹24,000 crore. The proposed project will come up in 3,000 acres.