

## Siddhirganj power plant switched on

PM says 8 more power plants soon



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offers prayers after inaugurating the 120-MW first unit of the 240-MW Siddhirganj Peaking Power Plant yesterday. Photo: PID

Unb, Siddhirganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has taken comprehensive steps in long and short terms to mitigate the existing power crisis in the country.

"The process has been started to set up eight oil-fuelled rental power-generation plants that would produce 530 megawatts."

The PM said this while inaugurating the 120-MW first unit of the 240-MW peaking power plant project at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj.

The government has also taken steps to produce 820-MW electricity with peaking power plants within next year, and 7,000 MW by 2013 through coal-fired units and 2,600 MW renewable energy-based powers.

The premier said that her government has allocated Tk 3,579 crore for the development of the power sector to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply to bring pace in the development activities of the country.

"We will increase it, if needed. We will do whatever required, whenever required," she said.

The PM said the country needs gas pipeline for quick supply of the fossil fuel that will be extracted from various gas wells.

The government needs time to ensure supply of gas in the near future. "I can ensure that in the future there will be no problem with gas, but we need time for that," Hasina said.

The PM also listed her government's steps to generate electricity from solar, nuclear, renewable energy, biogas plant and coal-based plants.

"We will construct that type of power plant which is appropriate in any place."

The premier said the government has invited the private sector to come forward to invest in the power sector.

She asked the officials and employees of the power sector to reduce the system loss, which was once rated highest in the world over 40 percent.

She urged the consumers to be more careful about misuse of electricity and gas. "Please don't burn gas in your gas burners just to save a fire stick."

The PM said that her government decided to supply electricity to the rural areas by load management in the city areas.

"Our prime aim is to make the country food-sufficient, and for that we supply electricity to the rural areas for irrigation," she told the function.

This is the first power plant inaugurated by Hasina after her government assumed office for the second time.

Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh, a newly established state-owned entity, is implementing the project with Asian Development Bank financing of \$ 109.864 million (about Tk 769.048 crore). The total project cost is Tk 1133 crore.

Indian company Bharat Heavy Electric Limited (BHEL) is constructing the power plant as the EPC contractor on turnkey basis. The Indians completed the installation of the first unit recently while the second unit is also in an advanced stage of completion.

This is the second project that the BHEL constructed in Bangladesh. Earlier, it built a 100-MW power plant at Baghabari in Sirajganj, being run by the state-owned Power Development Board for about last one decade.

Major equipment like gas turbines, generators, gas-booster compressors, generator transformers as well as state-of-the-art control system were manufactured by BHEL at their various plants in India.

BHEL provided two units of the plant, each having 126-MW ISO-rated gas turbine and generators along with auxiliaries and gas-booster compressors.

For the civil works and erection commissioning and other local works, local companies in Bangladesh were associated.

Besides this project, BHEL has executed several contracts, including 230 KV Baghabari Substation and extension of the existing 230KV Iswardi Substation.

Earlier, the PM inaugurated the first unit of Siddhirganj peaking power plant by unveiling the plaque.

Adviser to the PM Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, State Minister for Power and Energy Enamul Huq, ADB Country Director Paul J Hytens, Power division Secretary M Abul Kalam, among others, were present on the occasion.