

Coal shortage halts production at Rampal Power Plant

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Production at Rampal Thermal Power Plant in Bagerhat has been halted due to coal shortage after a month of its first unit started the commercial operation. The production of electricity was halted since Saturday morning, said Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Ltd (BIFPCL) deputy general manager Anwarul Azim said.

It was learned that production in the power plant halted as the authorities concerned failed to import coal due to dollar crisis. The electricity generated from this unit is not supplied to the national grid. Apart from this, there is concern about the production of the second unit of this plant. Meanwhile, the authorities of this plant are not able to say when the production would be normal. The plant cannot be run until coal is available. But, huge amount of money would be spent on maintenance work until the resume of production work.

Earlier, in the middle of December last year, the first unit of the Bangladesh-India jointly owned company started producing 660 megawatts of electricity. From December 17, the electricity generated here started to be connected to the national grid. During the inauguration of production in the first unit the authorities expressed hope that further 660mw electricity from unit-2 will be added to the national grid in June 2023. The power plant manager (security and administration) Wali Ullah said, power generation has been stopped since Saturday morning due to shortage of coal.

Production will be resumed upon the availability of coal, said the official. However, the official could not say anything specific about when coal will be available or imported. Wishing anonymity an official of the plant said Bangladesh Bank is delaying the approval of opening letter of credit (LC) for coal import due to dollar crisis. He further said, “BIFPCL has sent a letter to the Power Department and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) in this regard. On January 10 and 11, the senior officials of the power plant held several rounds of meetings with various levels of officials of Bangladesh Bank yielding no result in this regard.” BIFPCL deputy general manager Anwarul Azim said, “Production of power has been stopped since Saturday morning due to the lack of coal. Dollars are needed to import coal. We are trying to resolve this crisis quickly.”