

ENERGY & POWER

Crisis Looms Over Rural Power Supply

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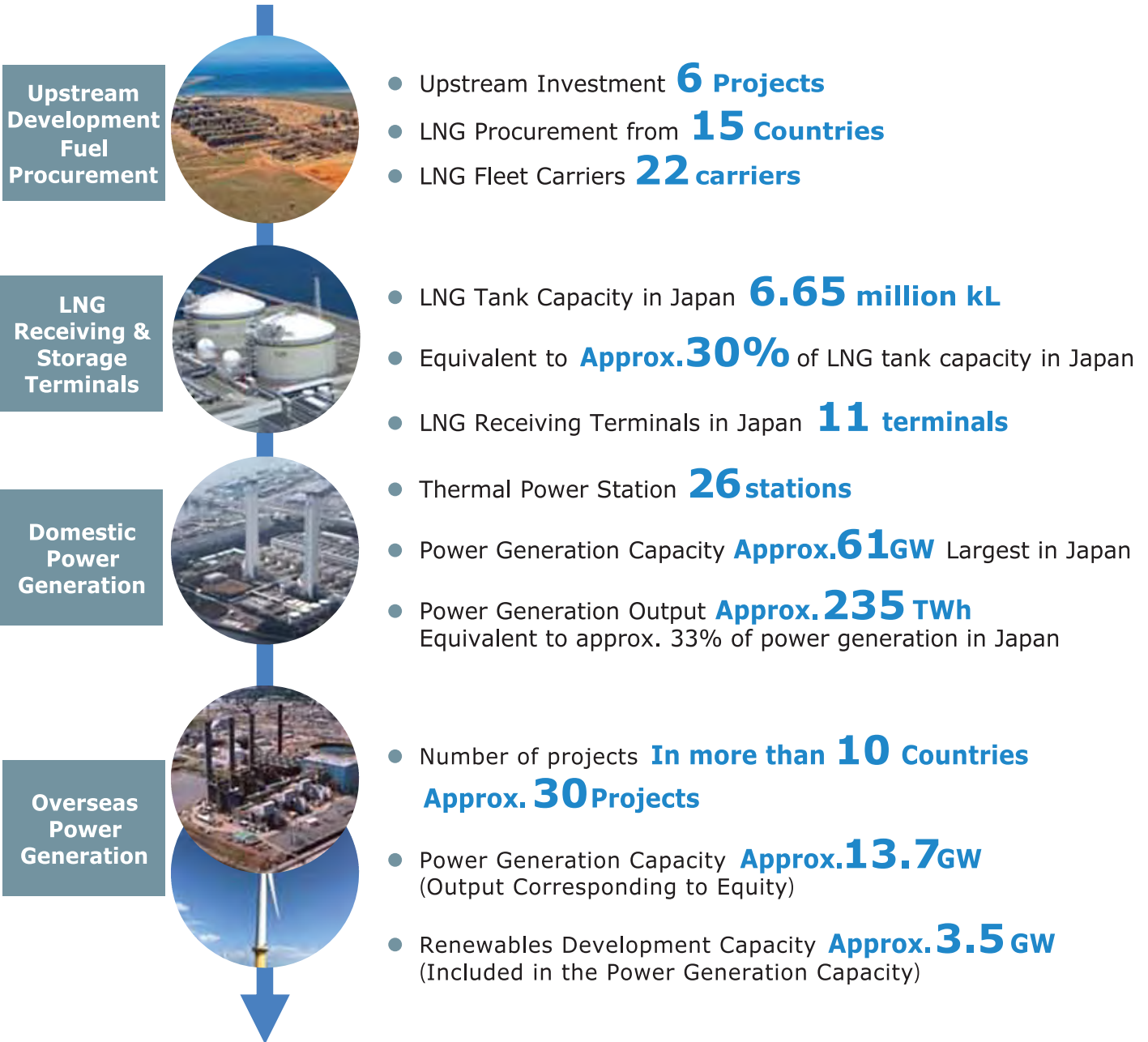
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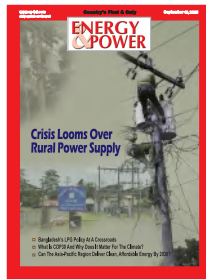
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EDITORIAL

Electricity is no longer a luxury in rural Bangladesh. It lights up homes after sunset, powers irrigation pumps, and keeps small businesses alive. For millions of families, it means children can study at night and farmers can run their machines. Yet this lifeline is now caught in a damaging power struggle between the Rural Electrification Board (REB) and the Palli Bidyut Samities (PBSs). What began as disputes over rank parity, procurement, and governance has spiraled into strikes, dismissals, and sedition charges. In the process, ordinary villagers—the very people this system was built to serve—are left anxious about whether their lights will stay on. Mothers worry about losing refrigeration for food, students about studying in the dark, and shopkeepers about keeping their businesses open. PBS employees feel sidelined and unfairly treated, while REB insists it has followed due process. But finger-pointing cannot deliver electricity. Rural Bangladesh deserves better than being held hostage to bureaucratic rivalries and political indecision. The solution must start with empathy and fairness: dropped cases, reinstated staff, and genuine dialogue to restore trust. The contentious merger debate can wait. For now, the priority is ensuring uninterrupted service and treating frontline workers with dignity.

Rural electrification has been one of Bangladesh’s proudest development stories. Allowing it to falter because of institutional ego would be a betrayal of the people who rely on it most. It is time for leaders to step up—before darkness returns to the villages.

h i g h l i g h t s

COVER



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Bangladesh’s reliance on LPG has grown rapidly in recent years as natural gas shortages intensify. Yet the policies guiding this sector remain fragmented and often misaligned with market realities. While the government is preparing a consolidated LPG policy to provide clarity, industry insiders stress that private operators must play a central role in shaping it... M. Muntasir Alam tells EP



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Women are disproportionately affected by energy poverty and remain underrepresented in the energy workforce and decision-making roles. Unlocking women’s full participation in the sector is needed to accelerate innovation and inclusive growth. A just energy transition must be gender-responsive, with policies and investments designed to close gaps in access, employment, and leadership..... More in Special Article



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A prolonged conflict between the Rural Electrification Board (REB) and Palli Bidyut Samities (PBSs) over procurement, rank parity, and governance has stalled resolution efforts. With protests, dismissals, and legal battles deepening mistrust, rural power supply faces mounting risks. Unless addressed soon, the crisis could disrupt electricity access, burden consumers with higher tariffs, and derail electrification gains.

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Beijing Rejects Japan's Protest over Gas Field in East China Sea



China's foreign ministry said it did "not accept Japan's groundless accusations and has rejected Japan's so-called protest".

A 2008 agreement saw Japan and China agree to jointly develop undersea gas reserves in the disputed area, with a ban on independent drilling by either country.

But negotiations over how to implement the deal were suspended in 2010.

Tokyo said 21 suspected drilling rigs had been positioned on Beijing's side of the de facto maritime border, adding it was "extremely regrettable that China is advancing unilateral development".

China said recently it had rejected a protest lodged by Japan over the development of gas fields in disputed waters of the East China Sea.

Tokyo's foreign ministry said it had confirmed that Beijing was setting up drilling rigs in the area -- where the two countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZ) claims overlap.

It said it had "issued a strong protest" to the Chinese embassy.

Fire at Nuclear Plant after Russia Downes Ukrainian Drone



A fire broke out recently at a Russian nuclear power plant after the country's military downed a Ukrainian drone, the facility said after the blaze was put out.

The "device detonated" upon impact at the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant in western Russia, sparking a blaze which the facility said "was extinguished by fire crews".

There were no casualties from the drone smashing down at the site, where capacity was reduced.

"The radiation background at the industrial site of the

Kursk NPP and the surrounding area has not changed and corresponds to natural levels," the plant wrote on Telegram.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly warned of the dangers of fighting around nuclear plants following Russia's military offensive on Ukraine in February 2022.

Wärtsilä Engines Selected for New 217 MW Nebraska Power Plant

Technology group Wärtsilä will supply its flexible engine technology for a new 217 MW power plant to be installed in Nebraska, USA.



The contract has been awarded by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), a public corporation and political subdivision of the State of Nebraska. The order was booked by Wärtsilä in Q1 2025.

The plant will be located near Hallam, Nebraska, and will operate 12 Wärtsilä 50DF dual-fuel engines running primarily on natural gas fuel. However, the engines can flexibly switch to diesel fuel if there are

interruptions in natural gas supply, such as during challenging weather conditions.

The Wärtsilä engines are scheduled to be delivered to the site in August 2027, and the plant is expected to commence commercial operations in 2028. Wärtsilä's flexible engine technology facilitates the possible integration of renewable energy into the system.

Indian State Awards Adani, Torrent Power Contracts for 2,400 MW Coal Plants

Adani Power and Torrent Power have bagged orders to cumulatively set up 2,400 megawatt (MW) coal power plants from the Indian central state of Madhya Pradesh, the two companies said in separate statements.

MP Power Management Company has awarded a contract to Torrent Power to supply 1,600 MW from a new coal-based power plant that would require an investment of 220 billion rupees (\$2.51 billion), according to a statement by the company.

Adani Power would supply power in the central Indian state



from a new 800 MW thermal power plant with an investment of 105 billion rupees (\$1.20 billion), its fourth major power supply order in the last 12 months, the company said in a separate statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government aims to lift coal-based power capacity by 80 GW to more than 290 GW by 2032, an increase of over one-third, to ensure a reliable, round-the-clock supply.

Omera Petroleum to Acquire Totalgaz Bangladesh for Tk 227cr



Omera Petroleum Ltd, a subsidiary of MJL Bangladesh PLC, is going to acquire Premier LP Gas Ltd (PLPG), a leading operator in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) market under the brand name "Totalgaz Bangladesh", for Tk 227 crore.

Omera will buy 99.995 percent of the shares of PLPG, and both have

signed an agreement in this regard.

The acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals, according to a disclosure posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website recently.

MJL Bangladesh said the move is expected to strengthen Omera's LPG operations by leveraging PLPG's existing infrastructure and its 1.6 million LPG cylinders.

"This is anticipated to boost revenue and improve profitability in the LPG business segment," it said.

Two PWD Engineers Punished for Rooppur Irregularities



The Ministry of Housing and Public Works has taken disciplinary action against two officials of the public works department over abnormal expenses in the Rooppur Green City project in Pabna.

Deputy assistant engineer Md Shahin Uddin has been compulsorily retired, while deputy assistant engineer Md Alamgir Hossain has been demoted to a lower pay grade, following findings

of the investigations by the ministry and PWD, according to a Press Information Department hand-out, issued recently.

The probe, conducted over allegations of inflated costs in purchasing and installing furniture for the 16th and 20th floor buildings of the project in 2019, found both engineers guilty of misconduct under government service rules.

The aforesaid capital punishments were given in separate orders, signed by Md Nazrul Islam, secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, on the order of the president.

DoE Cracks Down on Noise, Air Pollution Nationwide

At the initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Department of Environment (DoE) recently conducted mobile court operations simultaneously across the country to control noise and air pollution.

Significant fines have been collected, hydraulic horns seized, and legal action taken against violators in operations conducted in various districts, including Dhaka, Kurigram, Keraniganj, and Nilphamari.

In a mobile court operation in the Aminbazar area of Savar, nine vehicles were inspected. Five of these vehicles were fined a total of Tk 18,000, and nine horns were seized.

In another operation targeting black smoke emissions in



the Kuril Biswa Road Khilkhet area of Dhaka, conducted in cooperation with BRT, a total of Tk 10,000 in fines was collected from five cases under the Environmental Protection Act, 1995 (amended 2010).

A vehicle belonging to Victor Classic Paribahan was sent to a dumping ground for repeating the same offense despite being warned previously.

The DoE has stated that these types of mobile court operations to control noise and air pollution will continue regularly across the country.

LPG Price Down in September

The government has reduced the price of LPG by Tk 0.25 per kg for September as international raw material costs stayed flat, according to the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

The price of LPG was set at Tk 105.87 per kg, down from Tk 106.11.

Accordingly, a 12kg cylinder – the most popular form – will now sell for Tk 1,270 instead of Tk 1,273. A 15kg cylinder will sell for Tk



1,588, a 20kg cylinder for Tk 2,117, a 25kg cylinder for Tk 2,647, a 35kg cylinder for Tk 3,705, and a 45kg cylinder for Tk 4,764.

The price of reticulated LNG for homes has been set at Tk 102.12 per kg, while the Autogas price has been set at Tk 58.15 per liter.



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Govt to Purchase LNG



natural gas (LNG) from the spot market and fertilizer imports for a total of Tk 2,000 crore.

LNG will be purchased from TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd, United Kingdom, according to a proposal by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division placed at the meeting. The cargo is priced at Tk 485 crore at a unit rate of \$11.54 per MMBtu.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP) recently approved a series of import proposals, including the purchase of one cargo of liquefied

and Mineral Resources Division placed at the meeting. The cargo is priced at Tk 485 crore at a unit rate of \$11.54 per MMBtu.

Record Power Generation at Maitree Super Thermal Power, Rampal



7.62% of Bangladesh's total generation of 10,100 million units.

For the last three consecutive months, the plant has been consistently generating over 600 million units, totaling 2,036.4 million units.

Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant (24660 MW) at Rampal, Bagerhat, a thermal Power plant of BIFPCL, set a new benchmark by generating 771.70 million units of electricity at a PLF of 78.58% in August 2025.

This is the highest monthly output since its commissioning, contributing

Despite reliance on imported fuel, its scale, efficiency, and consistent performance enable Bangladesh to access stable and comparatively affordable electricity, supporting industries, boosting investor confidence, and reducing the risk of supply disruptions.

Gas Explosion in Narayanganj Burns 5 of a Family

Five members of a family, including three children, suffered burn injuries in a fire caused by an explosion of accumulated gas that had leaked from a cylinder at a building in Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila recently.

The victims are Manab Chowdhury, 40; his wife Bacha Chowdhury, 38; and their three daughters -- Munni, 14, Tinni, 12, and Mouri, 6.

The injured are currently undergoing treatment at the

Palli Bidyut Staff Go on Indefinite Sit-in over Dismissals

Officials and employees of 80 Palli Bidyut Samities (PBS) across the country have announced an indefinite sit-in protest, demanding withdrawal of dismissal orders and an end to what they described as harassment by the Rural Electrification Board (REB).

The announcement was made at a press conference at the Crime Reporters Association auditorium in Dhaka recently, where Deputy General Manager Mahfuzur Rahman read out a written statement.

Rahman alleged that the REB has failed to fulfil promises on structural reforms and res-



olution of professional issues.

Instead, the board has continued punitive actions, including dismissals, attachments, and harassment of staff. On 17, 27, and 28 August alone, 30 officials and employees faced dismissal or disciplinary orders.

Employees also instructed staff to ensure an uninterrupted electricity supply and maintain customer services during the protest.

Woman, Daughter Electrocuted to Death in Narayanganj

A woman and her daughter died after being electrocuted after a live wire of a water pump came in contact with the floodwater in front of their house in Fatullah upazila of Narayanganj recently, police said.

The victims are Rokhsana Parvin, 50, of Sheharchar, and her daughter Lamia Akhter, 24.

The incident took place in the Sheharchar area, said

Fatullah Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shariful Islam.

Family members said Lamia was a third-year student of Narayanganj's Government Tolaram College.

Sub-Inspector Kazi Abul Bashar of Fatullah Police Station said waterlogging is a common problem in the area during the rainy season. The family had installed an electric pump to drain the floodwater.

National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Shawon Bin Rahman, a resident surgeon of the institute. He added that Manab suffered 70 percent burns on his body while his wife had 45 percent burns.

Munni had burns on 28 percent of her body, while Tinni sustained burns on 22 percent and Mouri 36 percent.

The incident occurred in a ground-floor room of the three-storey building at Kanchpur BSCIC industrial area.

Crisis Looms Over Rural Power Supply

Afroza Akther Pervin

The conflict between the Rural Electrification Board (REB) and Palli Bidyut Samities (PBSs) stems from disputes over procurement, rank parity, transfers, and governance. PBS officials accuse REB of corruption and substandard purchases, while REB blames PBS for disruptive protests. Legal actions, dismissals, and stalled negotiations have deepened mistrust, threatening rural electricity supply. A possible way forward lies in withdrawing cases, reinstating staff, addressing service parity, and opening structured dialogue—while setting aside the contentious merger issue to ensure stability and reform.





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The old proverb “a stitch in time saves nine” seems highly relevant to the ongoing conflict between the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (REB) and the Palli Bidyut Samities (PBSs) over rural electricity supply. This is not the first time such disputes have surfaced in Bangladesh. Too often, problems are allowed to linger instead of being resolved. Bureaucrats and political actors have long been accused of deliberately turning issues into crises to benefit from “crisis management.” Likewise, the growing conflict between REB and PBS has now reached a stalemate. Both sides—REB as regulator and coordinator, and PBS officials—are blaming each other.

PBS officials argue that while they are responsible for delivering electricity to rural areas, most of the risky fieldwork is handled by contract staff. Permanent employees, they claim, face rank discrimination. Their biggest grievance, however, is that procurement authority rests with REB. According to PBS, REB overspends on low-quality products, which often cause system failures—yet PBS is blamed when things go wrong. REB rejects these allegations. It insists that all purchases are made through competitive bidding in line with technical standards. It also maintains that PBS staff were hired under a defined structure that cannot now be altered. Instead, REB accuses PBS officers and staff of committing a grave offense—cutting off electricity supply during their protests over the past year. To stop this, REB argues, it had no choice but to pursue legal action.

The question arises: Was this crisis unknown to the Power Division? Certainly not. Every detail was known. Yet the division has not taken concrete action to resolve it. Many observers note that since two consecutive Power Division secretaries were promoted to principal secretary, and because the Prime Minister herself has held the power portfolio, a kind of dual governance has persisted. As a result, when PBS officials first demanded in January 2024 that their positions be

given parity with REB staff, the issue was left to committee formation and not pursued further.

After the fall of the Awami League government amid mass protests, PBS officers and staff launched fresh demonstrations. They faced harsh criticism for power cuts, were charged with sedition, dismissed, and subjected to mass transfers. This has put PBS at odds with both REB and the Power Division. Most recently, PBS declared a mass leave program, but withdrew it following a warning from the energy adviser, who urged patience and assured that the government was working sincerely to resolve the dispute.

US Model of Rural Electrification in Bangladesh

Article 16 of Bangladesh’s Constitution guarantees citizens the right to electricity and energy. But in the mid-1970s, electricity was still considered a luxury even in urban life, with less than 15% of the population having access. At that time, the U.S. government offered support to expand access to rural areas.



With USAID assistance, the US-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) began discussions in 1976 to replicate the American cooperative model in Bangladesh. Until then, rural electrification was managed by the Rural Electrification Wing of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). In 1977, through a Presidential Order, this wing was dissolved, and the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB) was created. The order directed the new board to supply electricity to rural areas through cooperatives modeled after NRECA.

In 1978, 13 PBSs were formed, including what is now Dhaka PBS-1. On June 2, 1980, electricity was first supplied to Kamalpur village in Dhamrai Upazila, Manikganj.

At the time, BPDB still handled distribution, but revenue collection and system losses were major challenges—losses were as high as 70% in some areas. From the start, PBSs focused on revenue collection and loss reduction. Managed by consumer-elected committees, PBSs operated outside the conventional utility framework in Bangladesh. All PBS assets are owned by their members—the consumers themselves.

Today, the number of PBSs has grown to 80. Of these, 12 are profitable, while the others rely on cross-subsidies. Currently, PBSs supply more than 60% of all electricity in Bangladesh, enabling 100% rural electrification. With rising rural living standards, demand has surged. As of April, peak demand in PBS distribution areas reached 10,541 MW.

The REB–PBS Crisis

By law, REB staff are government employees, while PBS staff work under cooperative rules. REB employees follow the government pay scale, while PBS salaries are higher. PBS officials from Assistant General Manager (AGM) upward are transferable, but lower-level staff are not—a rule that has not been applied consistently. Moreover, ranks from AGM to GM are technically

transferable, but their equivalence with REB positions is unclear.

As a result, many senior PBS officials must work under REB juniors. Investigations show that the status of a PBS General Manager (GM) is undefined. REB informally claims that a GM is equivalent to a company director, but this is not backed by any official circular. PBS officials argue instead that a Senior GM should equal an Additional Chief Engineer in other power companies; a GM, a Superintendent Engineer; a DGM, an Executive Engineer; and an AGM, an Assistant Engineer. Despite years of petitions, REB has shown little interest in resolving the issue.

REB–PBS Operational Relationship

REB controls about 80% of infrastructure procurement, funded mainly by donor loans. The government borrows from donors at 0.75% interest, lends to REB at 2%, and REB, in turn, lends to PBS at 3% after procurement. PBS directly manages the remaining 20% of procurement with its own funds, often by pooling resources with two or three PBSs.

Allegations of corruption are widespread in REB's large-scale procurement. PBS claims that REB often procures substandard equipment and forces it on them.

Another flashpoint is cross-subsidies. Profitable PBSs send funds to REB, which then redistributes them to loss-making PBSs after deducting loan repayments. PBS officials argue that

If unresolved, rural electricity supply will face major disruptions, undermining quality service and national goals. Yet, with elections looming in February, a senior Power Division official privately admitted that the interim government is unlikely to act.

profitable societies should directly subsidize weaker ones to avoid irregularities.

Movement Ongoing, Program Suspended

PBS's movement has stretched nearly 19 months, beginning in January 2024 with a memorandum. During the interim government, they escalated to work stoppages, even cutting electricity supply in some areas—a move widely condemned. REB retaliated by charging 33 people with sedition, dismissing staff, and enforcing mass transfers. What began as one demand eventually grew to seven.

Last year, PBS staged a sit-in at Shaheed Minar for nearly two weeks. Negotiations led to agreements to withdraw cases, reinstate dismissed

staff, return transferred employees, and form two committees to consider whether PBS should merge with REB or be corporatized. Following this, the protests paused.

In January and April this year, the rural electrification association submitted memorandums, signed by 28,307 employees, to the energy adviser demanding withdrawal of cases, reinstatement of dismissed workers, resignation of the REB chairman, a uniform service regulation through merger or restructuring, and regularization of contract staff.

They alleged that REB sought to re-arrest those already out on bail, prompting renewed protests, including a mass leave program. Power supply was disrupted in some areas. But after warnings and assurances from the adviser, the association suspended the strike and asked staff to return to work.

Protester's Charter of Demands

The protesters have continued to press seven demands, the central one being the merger of PBS with REB:

1. Removal of the REB chairman, accused of destabilizing PBS through repressive measures.
2. Merger of REB and PBS under a uniform service regulation, or restructuring in line with other power distribution entities.
3. Regularization of meter readers, line workers, and dependent employees.
4. Withdrawal of "false" cases and reinstatement of dismissed staff.
5. Cancellation of punitive transfers and restoration of affected workers.
6. Implementation of fixed working hours and urgent recruitment to fill staff shortages.
7. Formation of an interim board to oversee PBS operations until reforms are completed.

Press Conference by the Energy Adviser

On September 11, Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan urged protesting officials to return to work or face legal action. He warned, "Those who refuse to return despite the government's call will



face strict measures. If necessary, alternatives will be arranged to keep rural electricity running. Thousands are willing to step in.”

He acknowledged that some demands were reasonable but suggested that “anti-election elements” might be exploiting the movement. He stressed the government’s willingness to discuss solutions but insisted that protests disrupting service were unacceptable.

The adviser said that, according to committee findings, 3,029 transfers had taken place, some routine. Already, 803 staff had been reinstated. He added that while many employees wanted to return to work, some were being obstructed. Legal measures were underway, including three General Diaries filed.

He also confirmed that the government was considering turning PBS into companies, though this required legal and regulatory reforms. Meanwhile, a



seven-member committee was investigating procurement corruption.

Conclusion

Resentment in the rural electrification system is reaching a breaking point. Both REB and PBS remain entrenched. CAB’s energy adviser, Professor Shamsul Alam, believes the scope for negotiation has narrowed due to the Power Division’s inaction. He warns that forming regional companies under which PBS would operate would only worsen the crisis by reducing staff and pressuring tariffs upward. He argues instead for a merger of

REB and PBS. CAB has even filed a case in court.

Analysts, however, believe time is needed. They recommend resolving the issue within a defined period by withdrawing cases and reviewing grievances, while REB and PBS work toward a compromise. Everyone agrees the current impasse is unsustainable. If unresolved, rural electricity supply will face major disruptions, undermining quality service and

national goals. Yet, with elections looming in February, a senior Power Division official privately admitted that the interim government is unlikely to act.

Experts argue that the only path forward is dialogue—addressing legitimate demands while setting aside the contentious merger issue. But this will require flexibility from both REB and PBS, and, most importantly, leadership from the Power Division. **EP**

Afroza Akther Pervin, Managing Editor, EP & Editor, Rang Berang

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**EXCELERATE
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Can The Asia-Pacific Region Deliver Clean, Affordable Energy By 2030?

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

The future of the global energy landscape will be shaped by Asia and the Pacific. Over the past two decades, our region has been the principal driver of global energy demand and emissions. Energy has powered prosperity, lifted millions out of poverty, and transformed societies. This progress, however, has come at a cost: widening inequalities, entrenched fossil fuel dependencies, and increasing climate vulnerability – which make achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate objectives challenging.

The Gaps We Must Close

What will it truly take for the region to realize the energy transition and achieve SDG 7 – clean, affordable, reliable, and modern energy for all – by 2030? The new Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development shows that universal access to electricity is within reach. Yet other dimensions of sustainable energy require urgent acceleration.

Clean cooking remains the most pressing challenge. Nearly one billion people in Asia and the Pacific still rely on traditional fuels, exposing

households – especially women and children – to dangerous levels of indoor air pollution. Renewable energy is growing, although the pace still falls short of what is needed to meet rising demand and lower emissions at the scale required. Per capita, Asia and the Pacific's installed renewable energy capacity remains lower than in other parts of the world. At the same time, energy efficiency continues to be underutilized, leaving untapped potential to reduce consumption, lower energy costs, and reduce carbon emissions.

These challenges are compounded by emerging pressures. Securing access to and sustainably developing critical raw materials is essential for advancing energy transitions, while expanded regional power grid connectivity is crucial to improving energy security and keeping electricity affordable. Rapidly growing sectors, such as data centers, also need to shift toward low-carbon pathways. Meeting these priorities will demand strategic planning, coordinated action, and a strong commitment to fairness and equity.

Emerging Momentum

The Asia-Pacific region has shown encouraging signs in recent years, with many emerging initiatives to draw inspiration from. Subregional initiatives, including the ASEAN Power Grid and the Nepal-India-Bangladesh trilateral power trade, are fostering cross-border electricity exchanges, improving reliability, and enabling greater renewable integration. China and India are at the forefront of renewables, while Pacific countries such as Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu have set targets for 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2030. Indonesia and the Philippines are expanding geothermal capacity. Grid-scale battery storage in Australia is helping manage renewable fluctuations and strengthen system resilience.

Industries, urban centers, and the transport sector are also driving change. Countries are rapidly expanding the adoption of electric vehicles through investment and infrastructure. Japan and Singapore are improving building energy efficiency with strict standards and incentive programs, and the Republic of Korea is deploying smart grid technologies to optimize usage.

These examples illustrate that innovation, investment, and cooperation are creating the conditions for scalable energy progress across the region.

A Just Transition for All

The energy transition is not only a technological shift, but also a social transformation. For many, such as workers in fossil fuel industries, those in energy-poor households, and youths entering the job market, the transition will be a lived reality. Reskilling, education, and social protection must accompany this shift, while creating decent jobs in the renewable and energy efficiency sectors.

Women are disproportionately affected by energy poverty and remain underrepresented in the energy workforce and decision-making roles. Unlocking women's full participation in the sector is needed to accelerate innovation and inclusive growth. A just energy transition must be gender-responsive,

with policies and investments designed to close gaps in access, employment, and leadership.

Turning Ambition into Action

Three ingredients stand out: Ambition in policy and planning. Countries need bold, integrated policies that align national energy plans with climate commitments, including net-zero targets. This means setting higher renewable energy ambitions, phasing down coal dependency, embedding energy efficiency into every sector, and ensuring policies are just and inclusive.

Scaled-up investment. Delivering SDG 7 requires mobilizing trillions in sustainable energy investment. Governments alone cannot bear this burden. De-risking mechanisms, innovative financing, and public-private partnerships will be critical to unlock capital flows.

Regional cooperation. Regional grid integration and cross-border power

trade, and shared approaches to the development of critical energy transition minerals and technology standards can create efficiencies and resilience.

The region has shown that transformative change is possible. Just twenty years ago, hundreds of millions lacked access to electricity. Today, universal access is within reach, proving that the seemingly insurmountable gaps in clean cooking, renewable deployment, and efficiency can be overcome with decisive political will and bold action. As Asia-Pacific countries gather in September at the ESCAP Committee on Energy, the message is clear: we must act with urgency, ambition, and solidarity, or risk being locked in high-carbon pathways. The decisions made in the coming years will define the region's energy future well beyond 2030.



Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana,
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

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Powering The Transition: EU-27 Battery Storage Investment And The Global Implications

Dr. Shahi Md. Tanvir Alam

Battery energy storage has rapidly emerged as a central component of Europe's clean energy transition. Across the EU-27, the years between 2015 and 2023 represent a decisive period in which investment in storage grew from almost negligible levels to a significant and expanding market segment. This narrative presents the trends, drivers, risks, and opportunities in a continuous, business-oriented style, while embedding the wider context of the global energy transition.

In the early years of this period, Europe's electricity systems were already facing challenges created by the rising penetration of variable renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. The inherent intermittency of these resources made it clear that greater flexibility was required if Europe was to achieve its long-term decarbonization goals. Yet in 2015, most EU Member States had very little grid-connected battery storage. Deployment was limited to pilot projects, small-scale residential units, or isolated installations co-located with renewable generation. From a business perspective, the investment case was weak, as costs remained high, revenue models were uncertain, and policy frameworks were still underdeveloped.

The landscape began to change in subsequent years as global battery pack prices fell sharply. BloombergNEF estimates show that average pack costs dropped from more than 370 USD per kilowatt-hour in 2015 to around 115 USD per kilowatt-hour by 2024. When balance-of-system costs, inverters, installation, and development expenses are included, the total system cost remains higher, but the trajectory is unambiguous. Battery systems were on their way to becoming cost-competitive, and Europe

could not afford to ignore the strategic importance of storage. By 2019, leading Member States such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and France were beginning to see commercial projects deployed at a greater scale. Investors started to gain confidence as markets for ancillary services opened, renewable-plus-storage hybrids were tested, and policy signals from Brussels became stronger through initiatives such as the Green Deal and REPowerEU.

From 2020 onwards, the pace of investment accelerated. Our analysis, based on Eurostat's official dataset on installed storage capacity, combined with cost assumptions derived from BloombergNEF and NREL, shows that EU-27 investment rose into hundreds of millions of US dollars annually by 2021 and crossed into billions by 2023. The growth was not evenly distributed. Germany accounted for a large share of total investment, thanks to its early adoption of storage incentives and its strong renewable base. Spain and Italy emerged as dynamic markets, leveraging their rapid solar expansion. France also invested steadily, particularly through capacity market reforms that created clearer signals for developers. In contrast, many Central and Eastern European Member States remained at the early stages, with deployment still measured in only a few megawatts or tens of megawatt-hours. However, business opportunities in those markets are now beginning to emerge, especially as EU funding mechanisms become more accessible and local grid operators recognize the value of flexibility.

Even with progress, challenges persist. Regulatory fragmentation across Member States means that developers face very different permitting regimes, grid connection rules, and market access conditions depending on the country. For investors with

pan-European ambitions, this creates complexity and risk. Permitting delays remain a bottleneck in several jurisdictions. In addition, supply chain risks are a persistent concern, as Europe depends heavily on imports of critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel. Competition with the electric vehicle industry has created volatility in battery supply and prices, which can affect project economics. Nevertheless, business leaders increasingly view these challenges as manageable given the overall trajectory of the market.

Compared with other global regions, the EU-27's progress is mixed. China is by far the world leader in battery storage deployment, adding tens of gigawatt-hours of capacity annually. The United States, supported by the Inflation Reduction Act, has also surged ahead in recent years. The EU, by contrast, has deployed less at the aggregate level, reflecting its more fragmented policy framework. Yet Europe's storage market is still significant and is poised for rapid growth as harmonization efforts continue and investors gain more confidence. From a business standpoint, the EU represents an attractive emerging market rather than a fully mature one.

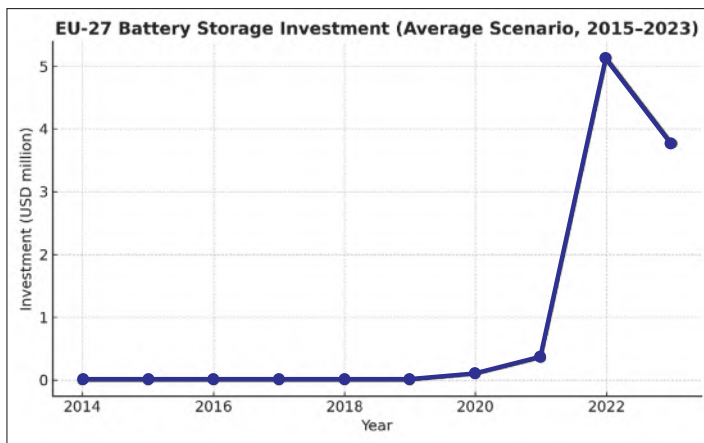
It is equally important to consider the role of developing countries in the global battery storage landscape. Although their current installed capacities are relatively modest, many developing nations are rich in the critical minerals needed for battery production. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (cobalt), Chile (lithium), Indonesia (nickel), and South Africa (manganese) are vital to the security of supply chains. At the same time, developing economies including India, Brazil, and South Africa are beginning to invest directly in storage to support

their rapidly growing solar and wind industries. For European businesses, these trends mean that partnerships with developing countries are not only important for raw material access but also for opening new markets for storage technology deployment.

Among developing economies, Bangladesh deserves particular attention. As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, Bangladesh is rapidly expanding its renewable energy portfolio, especially solar power. However, the challenge of intermittency is acute in a country with high population density, growing electricity demand, and limited domestic fossil resources. Storage is beginning to appear on the policy agenda, both to stabilize solar mini-grids in rural areas and to support larger-scale renewable projects. While the scale is currently modest, Bangladesh's efforts highlight the broader role of developing economies not just as suppliers of raw materials but as laboratories for innovative deployment models. For EU businesses, Bangladesh and similar markets represent opportunities for technology export, financing partnerships, and pilot projects that can showcase the versatility of modern storage systems under challenging conditions.

In rural Bangladesh, small-scale storage has long supported solar home systems. Lead-acid batteries, although limited in lifetime and efficiency, have provided basic reliability for millions of households. The lessons from these programs are important: they demonstrate both the willingness of communities to embrace distributed energy solutions and the challenges of scaling technologies that are not yet cost-effective or durable enough for long-term use. As lithium-ion costs fall globally, Bangladesh is poised to leapfrog from older technologies to more efficient storage solutions. This transition will likely parallel the way mobile phones bypassed landlines, allowing Bangladesh to rapidly adopt modern solutions without the burden of legacy systems.

Urban Bangladesh presents a different set of challenges. Dhaka, one of the most densely populated cities in the world, faces growing electricity demand from



EU-27 Battery Storage Investment Trend (2015–2023, Average Scenario)

households, industries, and commercial establishments. Grid instability, frequent outages, and rising air conditioning loads in the hot season all point to the urgent need for new flexibility solutions. Battery storage, whether deployed at the utility scale or embedded within buildings and industrial facilities, can provide the resilience required to sustain economic growth. Pilot projects in urban areas, supported by development partners, have already begun to test the feasibility of such deployments, and interest from international investors is growing.

For large-scale renewable integration, storage is no longer a theoretical consideration but a practical necessity. Bangladesh's solar potential is concentrated in specific regions, often far from load centers. Without adequate storage, grid congestion and curtailment risks undermine project economics. With storage, however, solar power can be shifted to evening peaks, stabilizing the grid and increasing the effective value of renewable generation. International experience suggests that hybrid solar-plus-storage projects can significantly enhance the bankability of renewables, and Bangladeshi policymakers are beginning to take note of these lessons.

From a business perspective, the opportunities in Bangladesh's storage sector are diverse. European technology providers see potential in exporting modular battery solutions tailored to rural mini grids, where durability and simplicity are critical. Financial institutions recognize the possibility of structuring blended finance deals that combine concessional funding with private capital to derisk early projects. Project developers are monitoring policy signals, anticipating tenders for hy-

brid renewable-plus-storage plants. For EU businesses, Bangladesh represents not only a market for exports but also a partner in building demonstration projects that can be replicated across South Asia and beyond.

The path forward for Bangladesh will not be without hurdles. Land scarcity complicates large-scale solar development, financing constraints limit the pace of investment, and institutional capacity needs to be strengthened. Yet these challenges also create opportunities

for innovative business models, including rooftop solar combined with storage, pay-as-you-go energy services, and regional partnerships that connect Bangladesh's grid to its neighbors. For European investors and businesses, engagement with Bangladesh's storage journey is not just an act of corporate responsibility but a strategic move in positioning for the global energy transition.

In summary, battery storage in the EU-27 has moved from being a marginal technology in 2015 to a central pillar of the clean energy transition by 2023. Investment levels remain below those of China and the US, but growth rates are strong, and the policy environment is increasingly favorable. At the same time, Bangladesh illustrates both the urgency and the promise of renewable energy storage in the developing world. Its vulnerabilities make storage essential, its progress in electricity access demonstrates transformation potential, and its ambitions for renewables open a pathway to a cleaner and more resilient future. For EU stakeholders, supporting Bangladesh's storage deployment offers dual benefits: advancing global climate goals while unlocking new markets and partnerships in one of the most dynamic regions of the world. Strategic positioning in this value chain, whether through direct project investment, supply chain engagement, or international partnerships, will be critical over the next decade. The period to 2030 will determine Europe's place in the global battery storage race, and businesses that engage early will be best positioned to capture the opportunities that arise. **EP**

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NET
ZERO
2050

MJL Bangladesh PLC's Sustainability Journey Towards 2050

Engr. Md Shahin Alom

In the age of climate urgency, where sustainability has moved from the boardroom periphery to the very heart of corporate strategy, MJL Bangladesh PLC has emerged as one of the most compelling examples of how an energy sector leader can align profitability with purpose. The publication of its Sustainability Report 2024 marks not just another annual disclosure, but a comprehensive declaration of its intent to transform Bangladesh's downstream energy sector into a greener, safer, and more inclusive industry.

This column examines the company's sustainability commitments, its alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), milestones in environmental and social governance, detailed progress on emission reduction and net-zero targets, and the broader message of responsible leadership.

Sustainability as Core Business DNA: At the heart of MJL's operations lies a conviction: true business success extends beyond financial performance. The company's Managing Director, Azam J. Chowdhury, makes this clear in his opening statement:

success must be measured not only in profit margins but also in how responsibly a company protects the planet and empowers people.

This is not rhetoric. Sustainability has been woven into MJL's corporate DNA—visible in its world-class Lube Oil Blending Plant (LOBP) in Chattogram, the LEED Platinum-certified Mobil House headquarters in Dhaka, and bold social initiatives that stretch from community health-care to skill development programs across Bangladesh.

The message from CEO Md. Mukul Hossain echoes this dual commitment: ensuring energy security for the nation while minimizing environmental harm. "Every drop of lubricant we produce, every safety protocol we implement, and every customer we serve carries the promise: to keep Bangladesh's industries running smoothly while protecting the people and the planet," he writes.

Adding to this, Director Tanjil Chowdhury of MJL Bangladesh PLC emphasizes that sustainability is no longer optional, but a strategic imperative for the petroleum down-

stream and all sectors. "We must adopt sustainability practices today to protect our environment for future generations. As a petroleum downstream company, it is our duty to ensure that energy solutions come with responsibility, resilience, and respect for nature," he notes.

Governance and Assurance: Transparency at the Core: MJL's 2024 report was prepared under a multi-stakeholder review panel, with oversight ranging from the Managing Director and CEO to heads of audit, supply chain, engineering, and HR. The process involved: Verification of 78 ESG metrics, independent assurance by internal auditors, Stakeholder surveys involving further strengthening, benchmarking against GRI, IFRS S1/S2, and TNFD frameworks.

This rigorous governance ensures that the sustainability claims are not greenwashing but backed by auditable data and measurable progress. The company's repeated wins at the ICSB National Awards for Corporate Governance Excellence underscore its commitment to ethical leadership and regulatory compliance, as well as the Circle of

Excellence Award from ExxonMobil.

In fact, MJL Bangladesh PLC has been recognized in the Bloomberg ESG rating, standing out among the country's top corporates for the highest governance standards. This global recognition is no small feat. It affirms that MJL's governance structure is not just compliant but exemplary—ranking it among the leading corporates in Bangladesh for corporate governance excellence.

Performance of Mobil lubricants meets Sustainability: A critical element of MJL's sustainability narrative lies in its high-performance Mobil lubricants, manufactured under ExxonMobil's stringent Product Integrity Management System.

- Synthetic lubricants are engineered with advanced molecular structures that provide extended Oil Drain Intervals (ODI). This reduces the frequency of oil changes, minimizing waste oil generation, packaging waste, and transport emissions.
- Extended ODI translates into fewer production cycles, cutting the equivalent greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with manufacturing and logistics.
- High-purity synthetic base oils deliver improved oxidation stability, lower evaporation, and cleaner engine operation—directly contributing to lower CO₂ emissions per kilometer driven.
- By enhancing engine efficiency and protecting against wear, these lubricants extend equipment life and reduce resource consumption.

This fusion of performance and sustainability ensures that MJL's products are not only powering Bangladesh's industries but also protecting the environment in line with SDGs 7, 12, and 13.

Alignment with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals: MJL Bangladesh PLC positions itself as a proud contributor to the UN SDGs.



MJL Bangladesh PLC officially unveils its Sustainability Report 2024

In practice, this means more than aspirational statements—it translates into measurable impacts few of which are:

- SDG 7 (Affordable & Clean Energy): 465,982 kWh generated from solar power in 2024, with plans to increase renewable energy to 30% by 2030.
- SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities & Communities): The LEED Platinum Mobil House consumes 30% less energy and 50% less water than conventional buildings.
- SDG 13 (Climate Action): Net-zero 2050 commitment, a phased decarbonization roadmap, and 9% reduction in CO₂ emissions year-on-year.
- SDG 4 (Quality Education): More than 3,200 car mechanics trained, 2,240 individuals in industrial engineering programs, and direct collaboration with BUET, RUET, and MIST on sustainable lubrication research.
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Female participation stands at 5%, with a target of 8% by 2030 and dedicated leadership development initiatives.
- SDG 3 (Good Health & Well-Being): Zero workplace fatalities since 2021 and financial support for employee and community health-

care programs, including the Bakhtunnessa Chowdhury Diabetes Center serving over 5,000 patients.

MJL's approach is holistic: all 17 SDGs are addressed, from poverty alleviation through Zakat programs to biodiversity conservation via tree-planting and mangrove restoration.

Emissions: Measuring the Footprint: The 2024 emissions baseline provides clarity on the company's environmental footprint: Total emissions: 1,109.59 tCO₂e (down 9% from 2023). Per employee emissions: 6.16 tCO₂e (14% reduction).

Breakdown by scope:

- Scope 1 (diesel combustion): 80.56 tCO₂e (7.3%).
- Scope 2 (purchased electricity): 1,024.75 tCO₂e (92.4%).
- Scope 3 (water supply): 4.28 tCO₂e (0.4%).

The clear message: electricity use is the biggest challenge, not on-site fuel. Thus, renewable energy adoption is rightly placed at the center of the strategy.

MJL has already installed solar capacity at Dhaka, Chattogram, and the LOBP canteen, generating enough clean electricity to offset around 170 tCO₂e annually. Future

targets include 500+ kW solar by 2035 and green hydrogen pilots in the medium term.

Net-Zero 2050 Roadmap: The company's roadmap aligns with the Paris Agreement and Bangladesh's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It is structured into three phases:

Phase 1 (2024–2030): "Efficiency & Transition": 30% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 emissions, Additional 150 kW solar capacity, Shift to LPG/NG, and pilot electric forklifts, Full Scope 3 audit.

Phase 2 (2031–2040): "Decarbonization & Innovation": 60% emissions reduction, 100% renewable electricity via solar, wind, and PPAs, Green hydrogen boilers, Circular economy practices like zero-waste packaging.

Phase 3 (2041–2050): "Net-Zero Achievement": Complete phase-out of diesel vehicles, align with global standard, Net-Zero certification via Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

This phased approach demonstrates both ambition and realism—tackling the low-hanging fruit first, then moving to disruptive technologies and offsets.

Social Commitment, Communities at the Core: Sustainability for MJL does not stop at emissions. The report documents over 15,000 beneficiaries across education, healthcare, skill development, and welfare in 2024 alone. Highlights include:

Education: Scholarships for employee children, computer donations, and technical partnerships with universities.

Healthcare: Support to Ma & Shishu Hospital, eye camps for 550 transport workers, and long-term funding for diabetes treatment centers.

Skill Development:

- 200 professional drivers trained.
- 55 women enrolled in the Women Driver Awareness Program.

- 5,000 lubricant end-users trained in efficient practices.

Social Welfare: BDT millions contribution to Welfare Fund for social development.

These initiatives strengthen MJL's role as not just an industrial powerhouse, but a community development partner.

Governance: A Model for Corporate Bangladesh: In an era when governance scandals often dominate headlines, MJL has charted a different path—one of accountability and transparent reporting.

Key governance features include: Board oversight with gender diversity (14% female representation). Compliance with OECD corporate governance principles and BSEC regulations. Independent audits for ESG metrics. Active memberships in the Dhaka and Chattogram Stock Exchanges, Bangladesh Association of Publicly Listed Companies, and the Asian Lubricants Industry Association (ALIA).

Repeated recognition—such as the ICMA Best Corporate Award and the ExxonMobil Marketing Excellence Award 2023—validates MJL's standing as a benchmark for governance excellence.

A Milestone Year: The 2024 Sustainability Report is itself a milestone: the first time MJL Bangladesh PLC has applied the GRI 4 framework, with plans for external assurance by 2030.

Concrete achievements from this year include:

- 9% reduction in CO₂ emissions year-on-year.
- 97% reduction in packaging material use via bulk lubricant distribution.
- Zero fatalities and 70% reduction in injuries since 2021.
- 93% employee retention rate.
- Expansion of retail and industrial touchpoints to 35,000+ nationwide.

These numbers demonstrate progress not just in intent but in delivery.

Looking Ahead: MJL's journey is far from over. The road to Net-Zero 2050 will demand deeper decarbonization, larger investments in renewables, stronger supplier engagement, and continued governance discipline. Challenges such as high grid emission factors and the cost of green hydrogen remain. Yet the company has already outlined risk mitigation strategies—from accelerating off-grid renewables to seeking global climate finance.

The report makes clear that MJL does not see sustainability as a compliance checkbox, but as a competitive advantage. By reducing emissions intensity to 21% below the industry average, it is already proving that sustainability can be a driver of both efficiency and market leadership.

A Blueprint for Corporate Bangladesh: The MJL Bangladesh PLC Sustainability Report 2024 is more than a corporate disclosure—it is a blueprint for responsible growth in an economy where industrial expansion often collides with environmental constraints.

By aligning with the UN SDGs, adopting global ESG frameworks, and setting ambitious yet achievable net-zero targets, MJL is demonstrating that Bangladeshi companies can lead in sustainability rather than lag.

It is a story of ambition, accountability, and action. And if replicated across industries, it could well be the foundation of a low-carbon, inclusive, and prosperous Bangladesh by 2050.

The company itself asserts: "We don't just adapt to change—we drive it."

EP

Engr. Md Shahin Alom,
Senior General Manager and Sustainable Lead coordinator, MJL Bangladesh PLC.



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What Is COP30 And Why Does It Matter For The Climate?

Anna Aberg



COP30, the UN's climate change conference, is taking place this November in Brazil. It comes as the world faces the increasingly devastating impacts of climate change and amid intense geopolitical turmoil.

A key task facing governments ahead of the conference is to submit new national climate plans, known as 'Nationally Determined Contributions' or 'NDCs'. COP30 will likely also center around money, climate change adaptation, and the energy transition.

With the US leaving the landmark Paris Agreement (for a second time), the conference will inevitably serve as a moment to take stock of how global climate efforts are proceeding in a highly challenging geopolitical context.

What is a COP?

The 'COP' is the UN's annual climate change conference. It brings together nearly all countries in the world to negotiate the multilateral response to climate change and monitor progress made.

The word 'COP' is shorthand for 'Conference of the Parties', with the 'Parties' being the signatory governments to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The 'COP' is the UN's annual climate change conference. It is shorthand for 'Conference of the Parties.'

The first COP (COP1) took place in Berlin, Germany, in 1995. The 30th COP (COP30) will be held in Belém, Brazil, from 10 to 21 November 2025.

The 'Presidency' of the COP rotates on an annual basis. Brazil will preside over this year's conference, and André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, a Brazilian veteran climate diplomat, has been appointed COP30 President.

Brazil will formally assume the COP presidency from Azerbaijan (host of COP29) at the opening of the conference.

Why is COP30 important?

Climate change is already causing severe devastation globally, and as temperatures continue to rise, the risks are increasing too.

In the 2015 Paris Agreement, governments committed to limit the rise in the global average temperature to 'well below' 2°C above pre-industrial levels, ideally 1.5°C. Progress towards these goals is, however, way off track.

Every five years, the signatory governments to the Paris Agreement are requested to submit new national climate plans (Nationally Determined Contributions, NDCs).

These generally include a numerical target for how much a country should have reduced its emissions by a certain year (e.g. 2030 or 2035). Some NDCs also contain adaptation measures and/or outline policies, strategies, and actions to promote low-emission development.

The idea is that, when put together, the NDCs should collectively be ambitious enough to keep warming in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

In 2025, a new round of NDCs is due. Submitting these plans is arguably the most important task facing governments ahead of COP30, and the level of ambition of the NDCs will undoubtedly be one of the measures against which the success of the conference will be judged.

Will countries' NDCs be ambitious enough?

The formal deadline for submitting new NDCs was 10 February 2025, but 95 percent of governments missed it.

Since then, a handful of additional governments have submitted, but most have yet to do so – including major economies such as China and the EU.

Brazil is encouraging governments to publish

their plans by September 2025, so that they can be incorporated into a stocktaking report that will be released ahead of COP30.

The last such report was published in October 2024. It is estimated that full implementation of the NDCs available at that point would lead to a 5.9 percent reduction in emissions by 2030, compared to the 2019 level.

For comparison, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates global emissions would need to fall by 43 percent by 2030 to be in line with the 1.5°C target. There is, therefore, a large discrepancy between the targets needed and those that exist.

The NDCs submitted in the run-up to COP30 are unlikely to close this gap. It will therefore be important for the conference to respond by setting out a pathway for accelerating climate action in the years ahead.

What are the other key topics at COP30?

The money issue

Developing countries need finance to reduce their emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and deal with the devastation it is causing (known as 'loss and damage'). The provision of 'climate finance' therefore plays a critical role in the climate talks.

At COP29 in 2024, it was agreed that developed countries would 'take the lead' in mobilizing USD 300 billion per year by 2035 to support climate action in developing countries. In addition, 'all actors' would work together to enable finance of at least USD 1.3 trillion annually – from all public and private sources – to flow to developing countries by that same year.

Azerbaijan and Brazil have been tasked with developing a roadmap to guide efforts to reach the USD 1.3 trillion. This 'Baku to Belém Roadmap' will be released in October 2025 and discussed at a high-level event at COP30.

The roadmap is not subject to negotiation by governments, and the measures it identifies will not be legally binding. It does, however, have the potential to inject positive momentum into the climate talks and facilitate the delivery of the USD 1.3 trillion.

To be useful, the roadmap will need to be relatively detailed and speak to stakeholders within, as well as outside, the formal remit of the UNFCCC. It will also be necessary to build confidence around its implementation.

Promoting adaptation

As temperatures rise, it grows ever more important to enhance resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement established a 'global goal' on adaptation (GGA), but it was relatively vaguely defined, which limited its usefulness.

To address this, governments adopted a framework at COP28 to guide the implementation of the GGA. At COP30, they will need to agree on indicators to track progress made.

Some governments and civil-society organizations are also pushing for a new 'adaptation finance goal' to be set at COP30, as the current one (agreed at COP26) expires this year.

Finally, the incoming COP30 Presidency is encouraging governments to submit 'National Adaptation Plans', to be used as 'strategic roadmaps to build resilience in the years ahead'.

What about transitioning away from fossil fuels?

Two years ago at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates, governments agreed to 'transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems' which was to be done 'in a just, orderly and equitable manner ... to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science'.

This commitment was made as part of the outcome of the first 'Global Stocktake' (GST) and was widely regarded as an important breakthrough.

At COP28, governments also committed to tripling renewable energy by 2030 and doubling the average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements globally within the same timeframe.

A key question since then has been how to advance and monitor the implementation of these goals, which has caused major controversy due to diverging national interests.

The topic will once again be on the table at COP30, but it remains unclear to what extent progress can be made. Brazil has indicated the conference could result in a roadmap to guide a 'planned and just transition to end fossil fuels'.

It has also been communicated that the 'Action Agenda' (which brings together sub-national governments, civil society organizations, businesses, and other sub-national actors) should support the implementation of the GST, including its commitments on the energy transition.

There is, moreover, an opportunity to utilize negotiation tracks such as the 'UAE dialogue on implementing the GST outcomes', the 'Just Transition Work Program', and/or a possible COP30 'cover decision' to advance the goals.

All that said, arguably the most important thing is that governments include concrete and ambitious measures to further the energy transition in their own new NDCs.

How is Trump affecting international climate diplomacy?

On his first day in office in January 2025, President Donald Trump initiated the process of withdrawing the US from the Paris Agreement, which he described as a 'rip-off' while pledging to 'drill, baby, drill'. Since then, the administration has undertaken further measures with significant bearing on climate change.

These include gutting substantial parts of the 'Inflation Reduction Act' and rescinding other environmental regulations; withdrawing the US from climate-related organizations and initiatives; propping up the coal industry; undermining and censoring climate science; and dismantling the USAID.

The US is also using, or threatening to use, various tools to discourage other nations from pursuing climate action.

The withdrawal of the world's second-largest emitter – and its largest economy – from global climate efforts has significant consequences. US emissions are now projected to fall much more slowly than had previously been the case.

The US stepping back could also reduce pressure on other countries, not least in the Global South, to submit ambitious NDCs.

And then there is the financing aspect. The US has cut its aid budget dramatically, and several other rich countries, such as the UK, France, and Germany, have announced they are making reductions too.

Lower levels of climate and development finance, along with higher US tariffs, affect the ability of developing countries to pursue ambitious climate action. It could also undermine trust among countries and make it more difficult to reach agreements at COP30.

However, so far, no other country has followed the US in withdrawing from the Paris Agreement.

What about the Advisory Opinion from the ICJ – what impact might that have?

On 23 July 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued its highly anticipated 'Advisory Opinion' on the obligations of states in respect to climate change.

The court found that states have far-reaching obligations under international law to protect the climate system and that the legal consequences of breaching such obligations could include making reparations.

The ICJ's advisory opinions are not legally binding, but they have great legal weight and moral authority. It is too early to know precisely what impact the recent ruling will have on the COP process, but it could be substantial.

For example, the ICJ found that the Parties to the Paris Agreement have a legal obligation to submit NDCs capable of making an 'adequate contribution' to the achievement of the 1.5-degree target, and that they must also put in place measures to enable the implementation of these plans.

This could impact NDC ambition in the run-up to COP30.

Is there too much focus on the COPs?

Even before President Trump returned to the White House, the implementation of the Paris Agreement was way off track. In light of this, wide-ranging discussions are taking place over how to reform the COP process to make it more effective.

Proposals range from introducing voting rules to putting in place criteria for selecting COP hosts to streamlining negotiation agendas.

Brazil has communicated that COP30 should constitute the moment the world transitions to a 'post-negotiation' phase, and that efforts must focus on 'action' and 'implementation' (of commitments made) going forward.

In an interview on Chatham House's The Climate Briefing podcast, the CEO of COP30, Ana Toni, commented that the COPs only constitute a 'moment in the year.' She said what matters most is what governments, businesses, and citizens do during the rest of the time.

In this vein, Brazil has placed the concept of a global 'mutirro' – a global mobilization – at the heart of its diplomatic strategy. The idea is to stimulate bottom-up global climate action across a range of actors, such as citizens and businesses.



Anna Åberg

Research Fellow, Environment and Society Centre
Reprint from Chatham House newsletter

Rooppur NPP Likely To Be Highly Derated

Engr. K.M. Mahbubur Rahman

Rooppur nuclear power plant is a prestigious project of Bangladesh, which has become a member of the elite club of nuclear electricity producers. The plant is situated at Ishwardi in the district of Pabna, on the river Padma, which flows lean in the dry season and is full and turbulent in the Monsoon. The plant consists of two units, each with a 1,200 MW Russian reactor model VVER-1200, for a total capacity of 2,400 MW. Both units are under construction, and one of them has started pre-commissioning tests. It is a turnkey project under Russian credit, and ROSATOM, a state-owned company of Russia, is taking care of the design, supply, installation, and commissioning.

The VVER-1200 model has been designed for cold countries like Russia, where cooling water below 20°C is naturally available at sea, lakes, and rivers. The nominal capacity of 1,200 MW is based on cold weather conditions. Bangladesh is a hot country, and so the capacity will be reduced.

Effect of hot weather in Bangladesh

The ambient temperature in Ishwardi reaches 40°C during the peak summer. The river water temperature also becomes very hot. The cooling water temperature after evaporative cooling in cooling towers will be 32°C, and that at the condenser inlet will be 33°C, which is 15°C higher than the design temperature of 18°C. As a result, the turbine will miss the output involved in this 15-degree range. The plant will not

be able to reach the nominal capacity. A research paper states that capacity will decrease by 0.444% for a 1-degree increase in water temperature. Thus, for hot weather, each unit of the Rooppur power plant will be de-rated by about 80 MW.

Borrowing of electricity from the national grid

Unlike conventional nuclear power plants, the VVER-1200 cannot drive its auxiliaries by bleeding its own steam. It has to borrow electricity from an external source. There are huge water pumps and powerful motor-driven valves in the primary and secondary loops. Additionally, the circuit contains numerous control unit assembly drives, ventilation units, and pumps, all of which require electrical power. To run auxiliary drives, the plant will draw 120 MW from the grid, and the generated power will be adjusted accordingly.

Power required for electric pre-heaters

There are many pre-heaters in water and steam circuits. They are all electric heaters instead of their own steam-heated heaters. They will require huge amounts of electrical power, which will also come from an external source. The power requirement will be around 10 MW.

Power required by the fans of cooling towers

The Rooppur power plant will utilize forced draft cooling towers to enhance evaporative cooling, producing cold

water for the steam condenser. High-power draft fans are installed around the perimeter of the towers at the base. The fans are an additional requirement for a plant in a cold country.

The fans will require approximately 12 MW of electrical power (0.1% of the nominal capacity), which the national grid will also supply.

Summation

Rooppur power plant with a total capacity of 2,400 MW will be de-rated to about 1,960 MW (for hot weather, 160 MW, and for refund of borrowed electricity, 280 MW). It will not be a surprise if the plant's average output drops to 1,500 MW. The situation will be a disappointment as the original levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) will no longer be valid. The cost recovery plan of the project will be in jeopardy.

Conclusion

The VVER-1200, a high-capacity plant, faces a substantial reduction in capacity and is not cost-effective for Bangladesh. Smaller plants, with a nominal capacity of around 500 MW that reject steam at temperatures above 50°C, will be a better choice for Bangladesh's future expansion program, if any. In that case, the steam can be condensed using naturally available water from a river or sea. The plants shall be able to bleed steam to power the auxiliary drives, rather than relying on an external source for power.

EP

*K.M. Mahbubur Rahman,
Senior Mechanical Engineer*



পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC

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মানসম্পন্ন বিদ্যুৎ নিরবচ্ছিন্নভাবে দেশের সকল মানুষের নিকট পৌঁছে দেয়াই আমাদের অঙ্গীকার

- * গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র, গ্রিড লাইন ও টাওয়ার জাতীয় সম্পদ, তা রক্ষা করা সকলের দায়িত্ব।
- * গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র, সঞ্চালন লাইন ও বৈদ্যুতিক টাওয়ারের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ যন্ত্রাংশ চুরি প্রতিরোধে সহায়তা করুন, বিদ্যুৎ বিপর্যয় থেকে দেশকে বাঁচান।
- * উচ্চ ভোল্টেজের বৈদ্যুতিক টাওয়ার ও লাইন হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্ব বজায় রাখুন।
- * বিদ্যুতের গ্রিড লাইন ও টাওয়ার হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্বে স্থাপনা নির্মাণ করুন।
- * বৃক্ষ রোপনে গ্রিড লাইন ও টাওয়ার হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্বে স্থান নির্বাচন করুন।
- * বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে সাশ্রয়ী হোন। আপনি বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয় করলে তা অন্য একজন ব্যবহার করতে পারে। এমনকি সাশ্রয়কৃত বিদ্যুৎ গুরুতর অসুস্থ কারও জীবন বাঁচানোর কাজে লাগতে পারে।
- * বিদ্যুৎ অপচয় রোধে সচেতনভাবে ফ্যান, বাতি ও অন্যান্য বৈদ্যুতিক যন্ত্রপাতি ব্যবহার করুন।
- * বিদ্যুৎ সাশ্রয়ী (LED/CFL/T5) বাল্ব ব্যবহার করুন।
- * যথাসম্ভব দিনের আলো ব্যবহার করুন।
- * বিকাল ৫:০০ টা হতে রাত ১১:০০ টা পর্যন্ত সময়ে বিদ্যুতের চাহিদা বেশী থাকে। এ সময় দোকান, শপিংমল, বাসা-বাড়ীতে আলোকসজ্জা হতে বিরত থাকুন।



Govt to Ramp Up LNG Imports: Adviser



Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan has said Bangladesh is facing a severe gas crisis due to dwindling domestic gas reserves and has planned to import an increased amount of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

"To mitigate the persistent gas shortage, the government will import more LNG cargoes than last year. Last year, we imported 84 LNG cargoes,

but this year we will bring 20 additional cargoes, taking the number to 104 to give relief to the industry and other sectors," he said on 27 August.

He was addressing a webinar titled "4th State of Investment Climate-Bangladesh", organized by Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida). Bida Executive Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun moderated the program.

Acknowledging the 1,000 mmcf daily gas shortage, the energy adviser said the previous government didn't take any initiatives to explore local gas sources. **EP**

MoF Urged to Convert BPC's Tk 274.20b Arrear Debts into Subsidy



Energy and Mineral Resources Division (EMRD) has urged the government to convert Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's (BPC) Tk 274.20 billion worth of outstanding debt into subsidies.

The state-run BPC owes such accumulated debt to the government on account of its losses because of selling petroleum products at lower-than-procurement prices.

The EMRD in a recent letter sought the Finance Ministry's necessary steps in this connection, according to officials.

When contacted, a senior BPC official said, "EMR division has already made an appeal to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for taking necessary steps so that the BPC gets rid of its debt burden."

Officials at the MoF said they will scrutinize the EMRD's plea for converting the BPC's outstanding debts into subsidy.

They, however, said it will take some time to make a decision on the issue. **EP**

Govt in Talks with Aramco to Sign MoU

The interim government is currently in talks with Saudi oil giant Aramco to ink a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to ensure cooperation in the energy sector.

State-run Petrobangla has already prepared a draft of the MoU, which is currently being vetted by the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

"We are eyeing to ink the



MoU with Aramco to ensure cooperation in the energy sector, especially for importing liquefied natural gas (LNG), refined petroleum products, etc," said a senior Petrobangla official. **EP**

Persistent Gas Crisis Impeding Exports

The country's falling gas production continues to plague the industries, seriously threatening exports and employment generation. The



interim government has hiked LNG imports to address the crisis, but the move is far from being enough.

The industry leaders are calling on the government to take urgent steps to mitigate the crisis, or else.

Even four years ago, the country's daily gas production ranged between 2,300 and 2,400 million cubic feet. Now, it has fallen to only 1,700 million cubic feet per day on average, impacting vehicle refueling services, power stations, residents and industries.

According to Petrobangla, the daily demand is over 4,200 million cubic feet,

but only 2,830 million cubic feet was produced recently.

The crisis is leaving industries with under-utilized goods production capacity, which is increasing production cost and trimming export potentials. Investors are also discouraged by the crisis, leading to reduced business growth and falling employment prospects.

Recently, BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan met Mohammad Saiful Islam, secretary at the Energy and Mineral Resources Division, at the Secretariat. There he placed five recommendations to alleviate the gas crisis. **EP**

Govt Advised to Delay TAPI Gas Intake amid LNG Surplus



In a significant development, Pakistan has been advised to delay any commitment to gas intake from the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline project until at least 2031, The News reported on Friday.

The recommendation, by international energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie, comes as Pakistan is already facing a

surplus of imported LNG, due to a dramatic decline in domestic gas consumption, a senior official from the Ministry of Energy told the scribe.

The advisory has sparked urgent deliberations within the Petroleum Division, where senior officials are now seriously considering either notifying Turkmenistan of a potential deferment or even withdrawing from the \$13 billion TAPI gas pipeline.

The warning comes amid growing challenges in managing Pakistan's existing LNG contracts and infrastructure. **EP**

Shah Muzakker Appointed as Honorary Consul of Croatia

Kazi Shah Muzakker Ahmadul Hoque has been appointed as the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Croatia to Bangladesh. On May 29, 2025, the Honorable President of Croatia, Mr. Zoran Milanović, officially conferred this responsibility upon him.

Subsequently, the Government of Bangladesh has granted him the Exequatur, thereby formally recognizing his appointment and authorizing him to carry out the responsibilities entrusted by Croatia on 18 August, 2025.

In response to his



appointment, Kazi Shah Muzakker Ahmadul Hoque stated, "This appointment is not only an honor but also a profound responsibility. I hope to contribute towards strengthening the bonds of friendship, cooperation, and mutual development between Bangladesh and Croatia."

Croatia is a picturesque country in Southeast Europe, located along the Adriatic Sea. **EP**

TVA Signs Nuclear Deal aimed at Deploying 6 GW of Small Modular Reactors

The partners claim this collaboration could provide enough energy to power the equivalent of approximately 60 new data centers as artificial intelligence (AI) drives unprecedented growth in electricity demand.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has signed an agreement with ENTRA1 Energy (ENTRA1), which plans to develop up to six gigawatts (GW) of nuclear power generation in TVA's seven-state service territory.

ENTRA1 is a strategic partner of NuScale Power, a small modular reactor (SMR) developer. ENTRA1 would drive the

deployment, financing, investment, development, execution and management of "ENTRA1 Energy Plants" that have NuScale's SMRs inside.

ENTRA1 aims to develop and own six ENTRA1 energy plants and sell the output to TVA under power purchase agreements (PPAs).

The partners claim this collaboration could provide enough energy to power the equivalent of approximately 60 new data centers at a time when artificial intelligence (AI) and other energy-intensive technologies are driving unprecedented growth in electricity demand. **EP**

LNG Re-Gasification Nears Saturation Level

Bangladesh's liquefied natural gas (LNG) re-gasification has reached almost the saturation level to around 1,053 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) with the country's two operational floating-storage and re-gasification units (FSRUs) running at 95.72-per cent capacity.

With the present infrastructure the country has the capacity to re-gasify around 1,100 mmcf in maximum, provided that both the FSRUs run in full capacity, a senior Petrobangla official said.

Currently, the FSRU, owned by US's Exceleerate Energy, has the capacity to re-gasify around 600 mmcf of LNG



and Summit Group's FSRU has a capacity of 500 mmcf.

To utilize both the FSRUs in full swing, Bangladesh will need to import 115 LNG cargoes in a year, said the official. The state-run Petrobangla is importing a total of 108 LNG cargoes this year (2025), the highest number in a single year.

It has planned to import seven additional LNG cargoes to reach the saturation level for supplying natural gas to gas-starved state-run fertilizer factories. **EP**

BRAC Bank Finances Two Ocean-Going 'Aframax' Oil Tankers for MJL Bangladesh



BRAC Bank has extended landmark financing to MJL Bangladesh PLC for the acquisition of two ocean-going Aframax oil tankers — the largest vessels registered under the Bangladeshi flag to date.

This transaction represents the largest single-ticket foreign currency (FCY) offshore banking term loan ever arranged by a local private bank in Bangladesh for this industry.

As part of the financing arrangement worth USD 95.77 million, MJL Bangladesh — a leading provider of sea freight

services to both domestic and international petroleum companies — has already inducted 'MT Omera Galaxy', an Aframax-class oil tanker with a capacity of 115,600 dead weight

tonnes (DWT), into its fleet. The vessel is the largest ocean-going ship to carry the Bangladeshi flag.

Building on the commercial success of this milestone, MJL Bangladesh is moving forward with the acquisition of a second Aframax tanker, 'MT Omera Liberty', currently under construction at a globally renowned shipyard.

The formal signing ceremony took place at Mobil House, Dhaka, on September 2, 2025, in the presence of senior officials from both organizations. **EP**

Ghorashal Thermal Power Plant Shut for 2.5 Months



(360 MW) on June 13, and Unit-7 (360 MW) on June 14.

The government has diverted gas supply to fertilizer factories, prompting the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources to request alternative supply arrangements for power generation.

Power generation at the 1,105-megawatt (MW) Ghorashal Thermal Power Plant in Narsingdi has remained suspended for around two and a half months due to multiple factors, including an ongoing gas crisis, according to its Chief Engineer Enamul Haque.

Citing the prolonged shortage, he said production stopped at three major units this June — Unit-5 (210 MW) on June 9, Unit-4

Enamul Haque said that Units 4, 5 and 7 are mechanically sound and could resume operation immediately once gas becomes available.

Earlier in June, Unit-3 (360 MW) went offline after its turbine rotor blades were damaged. Repair work is now in the final stage and the unit will also resume generation once gas supply is ensured. **EP**

ASEAN Centre for Energy and United Nations ESCAP Sign MoU to Advance ASEAN Energy Cooperation

Dato' Ir. Ts. Razib Dawood, Executive Director of ACE (left) and Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP (right) during the MoU signing.



The ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have officially forged a strategic partnership to advance ASEAN's energy cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, on 1 September 2025.

The signing ceremony took

place in conjunction with Asia-Pacific Energy Week, hosted by ESCAP, which aims to strengthen regional cooperation through accelerated just energy transitions.

The MoU was signed by Dato' Ir. Ts. Razib Dawood, Executive Director of ACE, and Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of UN and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, representing their respective organizations. **EP**

IAEA Team Notes Bangladesh's Commitment to Nuclear Safety at Rooppur Plant

Bangladesh's first nuclear power facility at Rooppur has demonstrated a strong commitment to operational safety, according to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) review team that concluded its mission on 27 August.

The Pre-Operational Safety Review Team (Pre-OSART) visit, conducted at Dhaka's request, assessed Unit 1 of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) ahead of its commercial launch, the IAEA said in a statement.

Such missions benchmark



nuclear facilities against global safety standards before they begin loading fuel.

Located in Pabna on the banks of the Padma River, the twin-unit plant will add 2,400 MW(e) to Bangladesh's grid once both Russian-built VVER-1200 reactors are operational. Unit 1 construction began in 2017, followed by Unit 2 in 2018. **EP**

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Bangladesh Moving Firmly Towards Clean Transportation: Fouzul Kabir



Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan recently said Bangladesh is moving firmly towards clean transportation.

"With World Bank support, we are introducing 450 electric buses and building EV charging infrastructure at existing petrol and gas stations. Investors in EV charging, EV imports, and operations will receive the government's full support," he said.

The adviser said this at the "Fourth edition of the State of Investment Climate – Bangladesh webinar", hosted by the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA).

The webinar was moderated by Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun (Ashik Chowdhury), Executive Chairman (with the rank of State Minister) of BIDA and the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA).

Dr. Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, a distinguished economist, academic, and former Secretary of the Power

Division, outlined the government's bold steps to transform energy security, transport efficiency, and logistics competitiveness.

On the transport and logistics sector, Dr. Khan said, "We are developing an integrated multimodal transport plan for Bangladesh. By linking road, rail, waterways, and riverine communication with goods movement data, we will identify infrastructure gaps, reduce costs, and ensure faster and more efficient mobility. This is the backbone of a globally competitive economy."

On renewable energy and sustainability, Dr. Khan announced several breakthrough measures.

"The Renewable Energy Policy 2025 has been approved, offering long-term tax holidays and reduced duties for solar technologies. The National Rooftop Solar Program will equip all government offices, educational institutions, and hospitals with rooftop solar units under net metering," he added. **EP**

BRAC EPL Investments Partners with Paramount Solar to Boost RE Expansion

BRAC EPL Investments Ltd (BEIL) has entered into a strategic partnership with Paramount Solar Limited (PSL) recently, with BEIL serving as the corporate adviser to support the solar company's expansion in Bangladesh's renewable energy sector.

The collaboration is expected to help PSL raise funds to scale its operations, invest in advanced solar technologies, and expand access to clean energy solutions across the country, according to a press release.

"We are delighted to work with Paramount Solar Limited as they explore fund-raising options to further expand and grow their business operations," said Syed Rashed Hussain, chief executive officer of BEIL.

Mohammad Jahidul Abedin, director and chief financial officer of PSL, described the move as a milestone for the company.

PSL, one of the fast-growing renewable energy companies in Bangladesh, is focused on delivering clean, affordable, and efficient solar power solutions.

The company aims to empower communities and industries by expanding access to reliable solar energy, supporting the nation's shift toward a low-carbon future. **EP**

Govt to Fund Installation of Rooftop Solar at All State-Owned Buildings



cent by 2040.

Presently, only 5.6 per cent (1,563 MW) of the country's total electricity is generated from renewable sources. On the other hand, about 56 per cent of the country's electricity is generated by using natural gas, the reserves of which are rapidly decreasing.

The government will provide funds from the public exchequer for setting up solar panels on the rooftops of all state-owned buildings, aiming to generate 2,000 -3,000 MW of electricity.

However, the state-owned entities, which generate their own income, will have to fund the installation of solar systems on their building rooftops using their own earnings, according to the National Rooftop Solar Implementation Guidelines.

According to the Renewable Energy Policy 2025, the government has set a target of meeting 20 per cent of the total electricity demand from renewable sources by 2030 and 30 per

In this situation, the Power Division has formulated a "National Rooftop Solar Program" to ensure energy security and prioritize renewable energy, according to the guidelines.

The program received approval from the Advisory Council in June, targeting the generation of 2,000 MW to 3,000 MW of electricity across the country by utilizing the rooftops of government-owned offices, hospitals, and educational institutions.

Under the initiative, all the government entities would install solar panels on the roofs of their respective buildings with funds to be provided by the government, officials said. **EP**

Experts Urge Bangladesh's Proper Transition to RE



Energy experts at an energy talk in the capital on 23 August urged Bangladesh to phase out fossil fuels and ensure a just transition to renewable energy.

A group of nine green platforms organized the energy talk at the Liberation War Museum.

"Renewable energy is cheaper and makes sense to be used for development for its sustainability," said

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, a non-government think-tank.

Over the years, Bangladesh pursued a flawed economic forecast and energy policy, ending up in overwhelming reliance on fossil fuel use, he said.

The result proved to be devastating, with a massive amount of money spent on paying capacity charges to idle power plants, requiring the payment of huge energy subsidies, he said.

Excessive expenditures, however, failed to reduce the country's energy crisis, with frequent power outages occurring, affecting life and business, the energy expert said.

The energy talk was attended by over 200 students. **EP**



Call for Tk10,000cr Renewables Fund to Minimize Banks' Risk

Like the Covid recovery fund, the Bangladesh Bank should form a renewable energy fund of at least Tk10,000 crore with support from the national budget to reduce lenders' risks, speakers said at a roundtable on 23 August.

They stressed that the central bank alone cannot shoulder the burden of promoting sustainable financing in the country. The government must step in with fiscal support, such as funds and



incentives, and ensure the availability of credible data to scale up green energy and sustainability-linked projects.

The roundtable, organized jointly by Oxfam and The Business Standard under the former's fair financing initiative, underscored the urgent need for large-scale financing to meet Bangladesh's renewable energy ambitions.

Hasan Mehedi, member secretary of the Bangladesh Working Group on External Debt, pointed out that the government has recently decided to generate 3,000MW of solar power through a Rooftop Solar Program within this fiscal year. The plan requires \$2.4 billion (Tk29,280 crore) in financing in just 10 months.

Also, the revised Renewable Energy Policy 2025 targets to achieve a 20% renewable energy share by 2030 and 30% by 2040, which would need \$7.2 billion (Tk87,230 crore) investment in the next five years. **EP**

BSREA, CIRDAP Sign MoU to Advance Clean Energy and Rural Development Across Asia-Pacific



The Bangladesh Sustainable and Renewable Energy Association (BSREA) and the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) recently at CIRDAP headquarters in Dhaka.

This agreement marks the first-ever partnership between a regional

intergovernmental organization and a national renewable energy association to jointly promote rural development through clean energy across Asia and the Pacific.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mostafa Al Mahmud, President of BSREA, stated, “This partnership is both timely and significant. Together with CIRDAP, we aim to empower farmers, cooperatives, and rural entrepreneurs by replacing diesel irrigation pumps, promoting solar households and villages, and introducing wind turbines in coastal areas. This MoU will accelerate our shared commitment to sustainable livelihoods and climate resilience.” **EP**

StanChart Launches RE Project

Standard Chartered Bangladesh, in collaboration with the international social-purpose organization Friendship, has launched an environmental initiative to provide clean energy, water, and climate resilience to the remote Notunchar Island in Kurigram.

Notunchar, a sedimentary island located at the Northeastern point of Chilmari Upazila, remains disconnected from the national grid and basic infrastructure, including electricity, gas, and clean water,



according to a press release issued by Standard Chartered Bangladesh recently.

Through this initiative, the island will be connected to a 70-kilowatt solar micro-grid, supported by a water treatment facility and a large-scale afforestation drive.

The solar plant, with an estimated energy output of 263 kilowatt-hours per day, will provide reliable power to 175 households, and multiple shops, schools, and religious institutions covering 875 beneficiaries.

Also, a water treatment plant – capable of supplying 60 liters of clean water per hour – will serve both the community’s drinking water needs and the solar grid’s maintenance requirements. **EP**

Entrepreneurs Say ‘Complex’ Bank Financing ‘Major Obstacle’ to Rooftop Solar Expansion



The discussion was jointly organized by the Bangladesh Sustainable and Renewable Energy Association (BSREA) and ActionAid Bangladesh.

Nahar said, “Bangladesh Bank has been involved in solar plants since 2008. Rooftop solar is now essential for our country. A policy of 20 percent solar power is being introduced in EPZs, EZs, and other economic zones.

“New instructions are being issued for commercial banks and financial institutions. The BPDB will take the initiative to launch cluster-based franchises in all divisional cities, including Dhaka and Chattogram.

“An escrow system will be introduced to ensure payment security.” Efforts are under way to launch solar power projects in the public-private partnership (PPP) model using unused railway land, she added.

Alamgir Morshed, chief of Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL), said the company will take the lead in financing rooftop solar projects, though banks’ participation could encourage mixed investments. **EP**

Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh’s solar energy sector claim the banks’ complex and conditional financing system is a major obstacle to the expansion of rooftop solar system installation.

However, banks are calling the financing risk very high due to delays in returning investments, despite instructions from the central bank.

A discussion titled “Unveiling Solar Rooftop Finance: Towards a Sustainable Energy Future” at a hotel in Dhaka recently highlighted challenges and prospects of this sector.

Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Nurun Nahar said the government will soon unveil a set of incentive programs to expand solar power.

Bangladesh Needs \$30b in Climate Funds, But Struggles to Get \$1-\$2b from IMF: Adviser



The Economic Relations Division and Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) jointly organized the event.

Bangladesh needs \$30 billion annually to tackle climate change impact, but bringing just \$1-\$2 billion from the IMF feels like an exhausting struggle, said Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed recently.

Negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for securing \$5 billion will begin soon, he added when speaking at the inauguration of a training session titled "Navigating Climate Finance: Media Reporting" held at PKSF auditorium in Agargaon, Dhaka.

The adviser said Bangladesh is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change due to its geography, frequent natural disasters, and large populations living on the margins in areas like Patuakhali and Shyamnagar.

Most of the crises here are man-made, he noted, adding that globally "we talk endlessly about climate change, but act too little."

Against this omnipresent lethargy, Bangladesh stands as a crucial example of resilience and community-driven response, Salehuddin said. **EP**

Air Pollution Reduces Bangladesh's Average Life Expectancy by 5.5 years: Report

A recent Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) report by the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute found that air pollution reduces Bangladesh's average life expectancy by 5.5 years, making it the greatest external threat to life expectancy and more impactful than smoking or malnutrition.

To address this critical issue, the Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS), in collaboration with the National Alliance on Cities for Children and Youth and Save the Children in Bangladesh, organized a

two-day training program titled "Air Action Leaders: From Data to Impact – Training on Air Quality Monitoring and Report Writing" on 28–29 August in Dhaka recently.

The workshop aimed to enhance the skills of youth in air quality monitoring and report preparation, combining important theoretical modules with practical, hands-on training.

The youth mobilization partners for this program included Prochesta Foundation, Amrai Agami, and the Youth Foundation of Bangladesh.

Marina Tabassum Envisions Climate-Resilient Homes for River Erosion Victims

Marina Tabassum, a prominent architect, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Bangladesh National Museum, and Chief Consultant of the July Uprising Museum, has become the first Bangladeshi to win the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture this time for her innovative climate-resilient housing project, 'Khudi Bari' or climate-adaptive 'Little House'.

Designed to be lightweight and mobile, a Khudi Bari home can be built in three days and dismantled in just three hours, offering



flexibility for families in vulnerable areas.

The Kudi Bari project gained momentum after 2022 with funding from the Swiss Development Corporation.

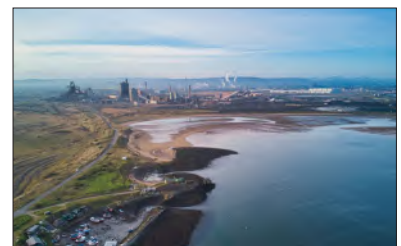
Tabassum initially tested the structures in Dhaka before expanding implementation to flood-prone districts, including Chandpur, Sunamganj, Jamalpur, Kurigram, and Meghna Char. **EP**

Everlence CO2 Compression Technology for UK Flagship CCS Project

Everlence has been commissioned to supply the CO2 compression systems for Net Zero Teesside Power (NZN Power) and the Northern Endurance Partnership (NEP) – two flagship projects within the UK's government-backed East Coast Cluster decarbonization initiative in northeast England.

NZN Power is poised to be the UK's first commercial-scale gas-fired power plant with integrated carbon capture and storage (CCS).

NEP will provide the transportation and storage backbone of the East Coast Cluster, gathering CO2 from NZN Power and other industrial sources and



permanently storing it in offshore geological formations beneath the North Sea – helping to decarbonize local power generation and industry on Teesside.

Developed as a joint venture between bp and Equinor, NZN Power will generate more than 740 megawatts of dispatchable low-carbon electricity, equivalent to the average annual consumption of more than one million UK homes, while capturing up to 2 million tonnes of CO2 per year. **EP**

Required Financing, Tech Assistance for Adaptation Still Far From Adequate: Rizwana



Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the required financing and technological assistance for adaptation are still far from adequate.

"As a deltaic and lower riparian country, Bangladesh is among the most climate-vulnerable nations. Our people are showing resilience and courage in the face of repeated disasters, but our capacity is being stretched due to insufficient mitigation efforts and inadequate international support," she said.

The Adviser made the remarks while speaking at an

event titled "Biophilia: Reconnecting People, Climate, and Culture" hosted by the Embassy of Switzerland recently as part of its commitment to action against the climate crisis.

Biophilia showcased how community-led initiatives are best placed to address the impact of climate change on left behind communities, said the Embassy.

The day-long festival was also an opportunity to promote the Swiss-supported Climate Action at Local Level (CALL) program.

Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan attended as the chief reciter of the climate oath. **EP**

World's First Commercial CO2 'Graveyard' Opens in Norway



The world's first commercial service offering carbon storage off Norway's coast has carried out its inaugural CO2 injection into the North Sea seabed, the Northern Lights

consortium operating the site said recently.

Northern Lights, led by oil giants Equinor, Shell, and TotalEnergies, involves transporting and burying CO2 captured at smokestacks across Europe.

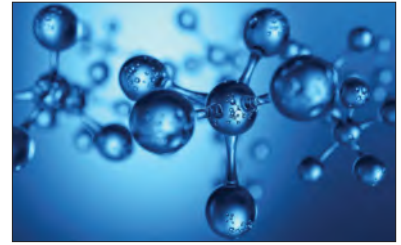
The aim is to prevent emissions from being released into the atmosphere, and thereby help halt climate change.

Low-Carbon Ammonia and Methanol Hold Potential in Energy Transition: GlobalData

Ammونيا and methanol are being promoted as low-carbon fuels and hydrogen carriers to support the global energy transition. They are currently being evaluated as alternatives for clean shipping, power generation, and long-distance hydrogen transport.

However, despite strong interest, their large-scale adoption remains slow due to uncertainty in the demand outlook in a price-sensitive market, says GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

GlobalData's Strategic Intelligence report, "Ammonia and Methanol in Energy Transition," reveals that countries such as Japan, South Korea, China, and members of the European Union are backing low-carbon



projects, while companies including Yara, Maersk, CF, and Mitsubishi are exploring large-scale investments to boost their production.

Low-carbon ammonia capacity is estimated to grow to nearly 250 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) by 2030, with more than 460 upcoming plants globally.

Low-carbon methanol is projected to follow a similar path, with plant numbers approaching 150 by 2030. Yet many projects are in early stages of development, with some hydrogen-linked initiatives already seeing delays or cancellations. **EP**

"We now injected and stored the very first CO2 safely in the reservoir," Northern Lights' managing director Tim Heijn said in a statement.

"Our ships, facilities, and wells are now in operation."

In concrete terms, after the CO2 is captured, it is liquified and transported by ship to the Oygarden terminal near Bergen on Norway's western coast.

It is then transferred into large tanks before being injected through a 110-kilometre (68-mile) pipeline into the seabed, at a depth of around 2.6 kilometers, for permanent storage.

The first CO2 injection into the Northern Lights geological reservoir was from Germany's Heidelberg Materials cement plant in Brevik in southeastern Norway. **EP**

Citizens Must Adopt Lifestyle Changes, Reduce Overconsumption: Rizwana



Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan recently stressed the need for public awareness for sustainable development saying that citizens must adopt lifestyle changes and reduce overconsumption.

"We must learn from our past mistakes and chart the course for our future," she said while addressing the "Bangladesh Sustainability Conclave 2025" at the

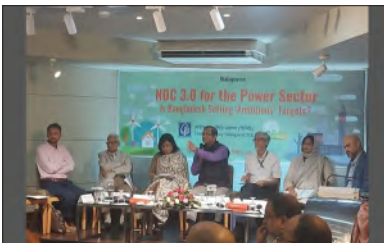
Dhaka North City Corporation Auditorium in the capital.

She also emphasized the need for increased investment in food security, safe food, clean air, and safe water.

She said that it is urgent to formulate and implement time-befitting policies in these areas.

"Bangladesh must transform into a beautiful, fertile, safe, and green country. For that, we must move towards sustainability," said the adviser. **EP**

Bangladesh's RE Goals at Risk Due to Continued Fossil Fuel Build-Up: CPD



Bangladesh's renewable energy goals are at risk due to the country's continued expansion of fossil fuel use, according to a new study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

"Without a clear fossil fuel phase-out plan, the country may struggle to achieve its clean energy targets, despite setting a 30% renewable energy goal by 2040 under the newly drafted Renewable Energy Policy," the report warned.

Launched in Dhaka recently,

the report titled "Revisiting Targets Set for Renewable Energy-based Power Generation by 2040: Projection of 'SMART' Target and Required Investment," highlighted that fossil fuel capacity is projected

to exceed actual electricity demand by over 4,000 MW in 2030, creating inefficiencies and reducing space for renewable integration.

By 2040, Bangladesh will need 35,713 MW of renewable power capacity to meet its 30% target, yet current trajectories fall short.

However, CPD warned that fragmented policies and the absence of a fossil fuel exit strategy create uncertainty for both public and private investors. **EP**

Illegal Factories Shut Down, Banned Polythene Seized in Drives

Mobile courts and drives were conducted recently, simultaneously in the capital and across several districts of the country.



A mobile court led by Sabrina Rahman, Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Executive Magistrate, was conducted in Dhaka's Bosila area.

During the operation, one institution was fined Tk 20,000 for occupying roads and keeping construction materials in open spaces, while several building owners and contractors were cautioned.

Under the Bangladesh Environment Conservation

Act, mobile courts in Feni, Sirajganj, Kishoreganj, Jhenaidah, Narayanganj, and Dhaka city's Chawkbazar, Imamganj, and Swarighat areas conducted seven anti-polythene drives.

These resulted in 15 cases, fines totaling Tk 62,000, and the seizure of 275 kg of banned polythene.

Additionally, electricity connections of three illegal polythene factories were cut off, and the factories were sealed. **EP**

Experts Urge Shifting to Renewables, Warn against Costly Energy Expansion

Energy experts and environmental advocates have cautioned that Bangladesh's growing reliance on imported fossil fuels and unchecked expansion of coal and LNG-based projects are threatening both economic stability and the ecosystem.

Speaking at an interactive session titled "Energy Expansion: Impact on Bangladesh's Economy, Ecosystem and Fair Transition" held at Premier University in Chattogram recently, they also called for a swift transition to renewable sources.

The event was jointly organized by Dhara (Protect the Earth), Premier University, 350.org, and Waterkeepers

Bangladesh, with the participation of youth climate activists, students, researchers, and civil society representatives.

Shafiqul Alam, lead analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), said Bangladesh's energy mix remains highly vulnerable.

"Around 40% of our total energy supply and over half of our electricity generation depend on imports. Yet, only 2% comes from renewable sources," he said.

He added that Bangladesh's global ranking in energy security, equity, and sustainability has slipped to 83rd, down from 77th two years ago. **EP**

Bangladesh's LPG Policy At A Crossroads

Bangladesh's reliance on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) has grown rapidly in recent years as natural gas shortages intensify. Yet the policies guiding this sector remain fragmented and often misaligned with market realities. While the government is preparing a consolidated LPG policy to provide clarity, industry insiders stress that private operators, responsible for nearly 99% of supply, must play a central role in shaping it. From infrastructure gaps to safety lapses, the LPG industry faces mounting challenges that demand urgent policy attention and regulatory reforms.

M. Muntasir Alam, Country Manager for MJL (S) PTE. Ltd, sheds light on the state of LPG policies, safety issues, and the way forward in an interview with Energy & Power Editor **Mollah Amzad Hossain**.

What is the status of LPG policies in Bangladesh, and how can they be improved?

The various policies related to LPG are now being combined into a comprehensive framework aimed at closing gaps and offering greater clarity. This effort is being led by government policymakers. However, it would be more effective if the private sector had greater involvement in drafting such a policy, since nearly 99% of Bangladesh's LPG supply comes from private licensees.

Developing infrastructure to import and distribute LPG to the last mile also requires joint efforts. Freight remains the most critical cost component in importing LPG. Ocean freight could be reduced significantly if imports were made in larger consignments, via VLGC carriers and refrigerated cargo, directly into importers' jetties. For this to happen, the river draft at Mongla and Chattogram must be increased. Similarly, improved expressways and larger highways would allow safer, faster LPG distribution through bulk tankers and trucks carrying packed cylinders.

Globally, the availability of onshore refrigerated LPG terminals, along with sufficient draft for VLGCs, is key to building a cost-effective LPG supply chain. Bangladesh is yet to build and commission such a terminal.

The country's annual LPG consumption is now about 1.8 million tonnes. But alongside this growth, accidents related to LPG are also increasing. Are operators fulfilling their responsibilities properly? What measures should be taken to prevent these accidents?

By law, licensees are responsible for LPG safety across the value chain. However, there is no licensing requirement for entering the retail side of the business. Anyone can become a retailer, provided they secure an NOC from the Department of



M. Muntasir Alam

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However, it would be more effective if the private sector had greater involvement in drafting such a policy, since nearly 99% of Bangladesh's LPG supply comes from private licensees.

Explosives if they plan to store more than 120 kg or 10 cylinders of 12 kg each.

In such an environment, licensees find it nearly impossible to identify, monitor, or guide retailers, let alone enforce safety. That said, operators themselves are bound by strict safety standards. Their licenses require periodic renewal, and regulatory bodies conduct physical inspections before granting renewals.

What safety measures exist for LPG cylinders and accessories,

and what risks persist? Many believe that cross-filling contributes to accidents. Consumers also complain of poor quality and quantity, while allegations suggest some bulk LPG importers indirectly support illegal traders. How do you respond?

In a compliant bottling plant, cylinders undergo physical inspections in line with international standards, the LPG policy, and Bangladesh's Pressure Vessels Act. Each cylinder is also tested using compact valve-checking machines, and filling units are designed to detect overfilling or underfilling. When such standards are ignored—as in illegal cross-filling operations—cylinders become accident-prone.

Another weak link is LPG accessories. Although BSTI has developed standards for items such as hoses, regulators, and stoves, implementation remains patchy. Without quality control in these components, risks remain high.

Cross-filling operators often acquire LPG through third parties beyond the control of licensees. For instance, some individuals transfer LPG from large to small cylinders, even mixing sand or water to match weight. Others use filling guns at auto-gas stations in broad daylight. These practices are outside the operators' control, and enforcement by regulators and law enforcement agencies is essential.

Does Bangladesh have too many LPG operators? Some argue that the number is disproportionately high compared to the market size, creating unhealthy competition. Do you agree?

Yes, the number of operators exceeds the market's needs. If you calculate the combined bottling and evacuation capacity, it is far higher than current daily demand, leaving many operators with idle capacity.

Instead of importing LPG in small consignments under limited-term agreements, if we imported the country's monthly requirement through VLGC carriers into onshore terminals, costs would fall significantly. The current fragmented import system makes operations less efficient and keeps prices elevated.

Although costlier than domestic gas, LPG is cleaner than coal or furnace oil and ensures continuity in export-oriented sectors such as textiles.

Many believe reducing transportation costs, especially in imports, could significantly lower LPG prices. What is the biggest barrier?

The biggest obstacle is infrastructure. Bangladesh lacks an import terminal with sufficient river draft to handle VLGC cargo. As a result, imports rely on smaller pressurized vessels carrying 2,500–5,000 tonnes per shipment, which drives up freight costs. Building a terminal with VLGC-handling capacity is essential to lowering import costs.

The shortage of natural gas has reached a critical stage. LPG use in industries is rising. Can LPG help mitigate Bangladesh's gas crisis in industries?


Yes, LPG can serve as a bridging solution. Industries are under immense strain due to declining domestic gas and costly LNG imports. LPG provides a decentralized, reliable energy source that does not require pipelines, making it suitable for small and medium industries, industrial clusters, and export processing zones.

Although costlier than domestic gas, LPG is cleaner than coal or furnace oil and ensures continuity in export-oriented sectors such as textiles. With supportive policies—such as fair pricing for industries, tax incentives, and investments in storage and distribution—LPG could play a critical role in diversifying energy sources and reducing dependence on LNG.

Some argue that a fixed timeframe should be set to phase out CNG in transport and replace it with LPG. What is your view?

Natural gas and CNG are heavily subsidized. Whether to phase them out depends on the government's broader energy strategy. Should such a decision be made, auto-LPG is a ready and viable alternative.

How effective are current regulations in curbing cross-filling and unsafe practices?

LPG policies have improved significantly over the years, and regulators generally support licensees. However, widespread cross-filling and unsafe practices demand stricter, more proactive enforcement on the ground—not only by regulators but also by law enforcement agencies. 

YUNUS NEEDS HELP TO OVERCOME ALL CAVEATS IN HOLDING FEBRUARY POLLS

Reverse Swing



Farid Hossain

February is the deadline set by the interim government of Professor Muhammad Yunus for holding parliamentary elections and handing over power to the elected people's representatives. Yunus has promised to make next year's vote free, fair, and festive. Since the election roadmap was announced, the Nobel laureate has emphasized the importance of fulfilling his commitment to holding one of the country's freest and fairest votes, to be remembered forever. His press wing has reiterated that no power in Bangladesh can break the interim government's vow to hold the balloting as per the schedule. Instructions have already been given to the Election Commission to prepare for holding the vote, which, if held, will be the second such exercise in less than two years. As we all know, the vote has to be held as the president dissolved the 13th parliament shortly after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League-led government in the wake of the mass protests in August last year.

Despite the government's resolve, many in Bangladesh still have doubts about the elections being held on time

or at all. The political parties – minus the Awami League, whose activities have been suspended until the trial of its key leaders for crimes against humanity – have welcomed the announcement of the election roadmap, but the air of uncertainty is yet to clear. The major players – BNP, Jamaat, and NCP – agree on the election schedule, but they have serious disagreements on how the July Charter would be implemented. Disagreements persist on the question of the professional representation (PR) system, which requires fundamental changes in the constitution. BNP objects to PR either in a direct vote to elect the legislature or in electing the proposed Upper House. Converting the parliament into two Houses – Lower and Upper- is still on paper, and it's far from being a reality. Yet debate on how the Upper House will be elected rages on, with the Consensus Commission finding it hard to bring the participating political parties to a consensus across the table. Jamaat, NCP, and several other parties insist that the legislature be elected through the proportional votes the contesting

parties win in the election. For example, if BNP gets 30 percent of the votes, it will get the same percentage of seats in the parliament. The seats will thus be shared by the contesting parties in accordance with the number of votes they each poll. The voters will cast ballots in favor of the party, not for any particular candidate. The parties will distribute the seats among their chosen candidates on the basis of vote percentage. This system, rare in any democracy, is complicated and entirely unknown to most of our voters. However, it suits the smaller parties as it provides a step for them to get into the House, which, under the current system, remains an unreachable goal. So when they press for the introduction of a PR system, there seems to be a "method in the madness" syndrome.

Last year's political unity against Sheikh Hasina seems to be still strong, but questions about its solidity remain. This has led to political uncertainty, deepened further by a deteriorating law and order characterized by mob violence. Analysts join the political parties in the chorus for holding the general elections by February or risk plunging the nation into more chaos and into the darkness, not only politically but also socially and, most importantly, economically. Under Yunus's administration, the financial aspects of the economy are showing signs of a turnaround, but the growth has slowed down to 3.6 percent, with inflation showing no sign of a significant fall. It has eased a bit, but more needs to be done to bring it under sustainable control.

The warning is that the country's democratic aspirations will get a jolt if Yunus fails to hold the February polls. Preventive steps are urgent now before it gets out of hand. **EP**



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