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Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar

–national-grid generation now stands at 266.3MW

THE government has stepped up efforts to address a growing power-supply gap in Region 10, where electricity demand has risen to 15.1 megawatts (MW), exceeding the 14 MW.

Providing an update on the national grid, Minister of Public Utilities and Aviation, Deodat Indar on Monday said the government has added emergency generation and is aggressively managing demand in Linden as hotter weather and rising economic activities push the system beyond its limits.

Linden receives power from the Bosai minerals group.

To ease the pressure during peak periods – 13:00hrs to 15:00hrs and 19:00hrs to 21:00hrs., the government has asked sawmillers in Linden to shift their operations to off-peak hours.

"There are two peaks in Linden, meaning that, the power demand spikes at its highest during those two [times] of the day," he explained.

According to the minister, President Irfaan Ali, Finance Minister, Dr Ashni Singh and himself met with the sawmillers to address concerns over the shortage and outline the emergency plan. In parallel, the Hinterland Electrification Company Inc (HECI) and Bosai have agreed to install an additional 3 MWs of generation at the Bosai facility.

Beyond Bosai, the government is also tapping idle mining capacity to bolster Linden's supply.

The minister disclosed that three 1 MW engines from a manganese company in Port Kaituma, are currently being transported to Linden.

"So, we have been talking to the mining community. We have spoken to a number of them, Rusal and a whole lot of us. We have also spoken to GMI, which is the manganese company in Port Kaituma, and they have five megawatts of engine that they are not using. Each one [sic] of them carry [sic] one megawatt. It's five engines. So, we are in the process right now, as we speak, to transport those engines, three of them to Linden," he added.

The minister added that other private players in the power sector have indicated that they may be able to provide about 3 MW more in engine capacity once the necessary transformers are sourced.

Meanwhile, the government is moving to reinforce Guyana's electricity grid with new generation, river cables and transmission lines, as rising demand and ageing equipment put key corridors under strain.

The minister noted that although Region Two has sufficient generation on paper, frequent engine trips have been causing outages. To relieve the pressure, the administration plans to divert roughly 2 MW of additional generation from the North-West to Essequibo, so that small caterpillar sets can finally be taken offline for overdue overhauls.

"So, we are [sic] also put out a tender, and the tender is closed, and it is in its final stage of evaluation for eight megawatts for Region Two, because of these very same small caterpillar sets that we have there that are running beyond their normal hours for overhaul," he explained.

Meanwhile, in Region Three, peak demand has climbed from 26 MW to about 41 MW, sharply increasing the risk to the submarine cable that carries power from Region Four across the Demerara River.

"The cable across the river is taxed. It's supposed to be carrying a safe limit of about seven, to eight megawatts of power. It was actually transmitting15 megawatts a few days back, and that put the cable at risk because if that cable fries, we'll have problems in Region Three."

To ease the load, the government has launched a project to lay a second cable along the riverbed from the Princes Street substation on the Georgetown side to the substation at Vreed-en-Hoop.

The contractors he noted have already moblised and they will start laying the cable on the Demerara River today.

In Region Four, a major upgrade was carried out on Sunday at the new Georgetown substation, which receives 70 MW from the powership.

That additional 5 MW will increase the contribution from the powership beyond its current 70 MW.

On the East Bank corridor, the single transmission line that runs from Garden of Eden to Timehri and onto the Soesdyke–Linden Highway has reached its thermal limit, causing trips when demand peaks. A contract has been awarded to Ramatar and Sons to construct a new transmission line, with materials already being moved and pole planting expected to start by Wednesday.

Indar confirmed that overall available generation on the grid has increased following the successful commissioning of a new 9.3 MW set at Garden of Eden.

This has pushed the total available generation to 266.3 MW, providing a reserve of about 26 MW against peak demand, which now averages around 240 MW.

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