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Date }

Chief Editor/News Editor
Director (News) / News Manager
Web Editor

Dear Sir/Madam,

CEB Clarifies: No Thermal Oil Used During Renewable Management Periods

Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) is pleased to provide this summary of grid operations over April 11–13, 2025, to clarify its call for assistance from owners of rooftop solar units, to manage the balance between supply and demand for electricity over the holiday period.

After a detailed study on the forecast demand for electricity during April holidays and the operational renewable energy supplies, CEB decided that supply of electricity would need to be managed during April holidays.

At any given moment, electricity production should exactly match the consumption. If customers are not using much electricity or closed down, electricity production too, has to be reduced. On Sundays and national holidays, the customer demand is very low, and therefore, electricity supply too, must be reduced.

On Thursday 10th April from 1500hrs onwards, supply from rooftop units of 100kW and above, operating on net plus and net plus plus contracts, were shut down. These units, numbering about 500, supply energy to the grid on a commercial basis. In line with standard operational practices during periods of low-demand, similar to other CEB and privately-owned power plants, these units remain offline throughout the holiday period, to support grid stability. The vast majority of 100,000 customers have solar units smaller than 100 kW, and consume some of its production at the same location.

On Friday, April 11th, as some factories were still working, the morning demand was met initially with the support of three coal generating units. Later during the day, all three coal units were backed off to their minimum power levels to accommodate solar generation from about 100,000 smaller solar units during daytime. The daytime peak demand was successfully met using a diverse energy mix of hydro, coal, naphtha, wind, solar, and mini hydro sources. As the night-time demand sharply declined, signaling that the holiday season has commenced, one coal unit was completely shut down at 21:57.

Although rooftop solar units, which collectively exceed 1,500 MW in capacity, are not directly visible to the System Control Centre (SCC), the recorded overall demand during most of the daytime remained above 1,500 MW. This suggests a significant contribution from rooftop solar units. Additionally, large synchronous generators played a vital role in maintaining system inertia, ensuring grid stability throughout the day.

On Saturday April 12th, with factories and offices shut down, electricity demand dropped sharply as expected. The demand at 6am, before any solar units commenced production, was lower by about 400 MW, compared with a typical Saturday. The only remaining oil power plant that was helping overnight in the absence of one coal unit, the Kelanitissa power plant using Naphtha from the refinery, was fully shutdown by 09:16 AM to accommodate the production from solar units. No oil-fired power plants operated the rest of daytime. Only two coal units operating at

minimum power and larger hydro power plants maintained grid stability. CEB prioritized renewables, allowing all small solar units to produce, but as a precaution, issued SMS alerts to all rooftop solar owners to support grid management. The night peak was met using hydropower and ramped-up coal power, from the two coal units that were still in operation. Shutting down another coal unit would have risked meeting night-time customer demand and inertia.

On Sunday April 13th, the demand fell further as shops and other commercial customers, too, closed down, increasing grid stability challenges. CEB again issued a public request to all rooftop solar unit owners, including smaller units, to temporarily shut down during the day. Only two coal units at minimum production operated during daytime, to accommodate solar power—no oil-fired power plants were used.

Throughout this period, only two coal units, operating at minimum power at daytime to enable solar power to be absorbed, but operating at almost full power overnight to serve the customer demand, were active. Oil-fired generation was used briefly during night peaks, when the other renewables (wind and biomass) and hydropower alone could not meet the demand.

CEB continuously reviews the supply-demand situation. When there is a risk of grid instability, upon receiving an SMS, CEB requests all owners of rooftop solar to shut down their units until 3:00 PM. We appreciate your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

CEYLON ELECTRICITY BOARD



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