Power demand in August rises 12.8% to 169 bn units

SAURAV ANAND
New Delhi, September 10

INDIA'S POWER DEMAND surged 12.8% year-on-year to an all-time August high of about 169 billion units (BU), while electricity prices outside solar-generation hours jumped nearly 33% to ₹5.3 per unit from ₹4, signalling tighter supply conditions as weak rainfall pushed up cooling demand.

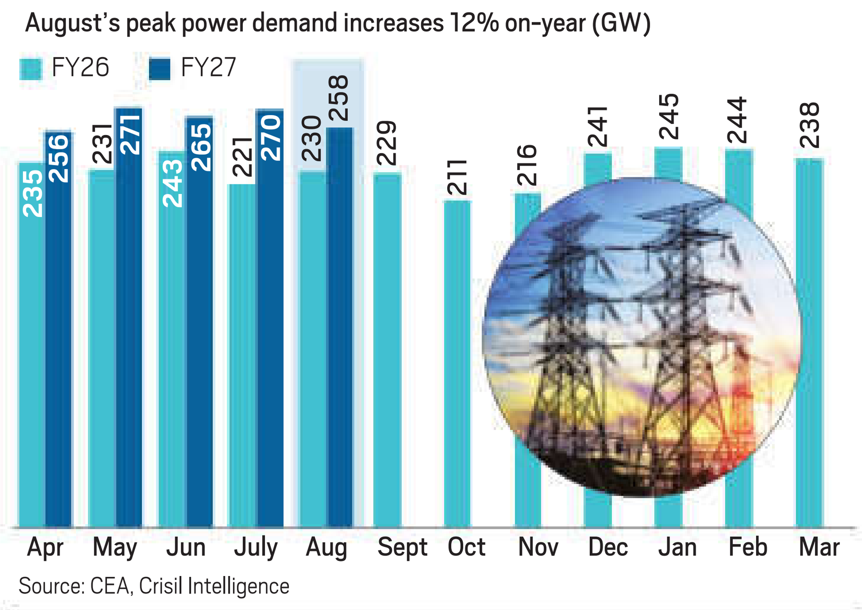
Peak power demand also rose about 12% to 258 GW from 230 GW a year earlier.

The price divergence was sharp. Average market clearing prices during solar hours remained virtually flat at ₹1.62 per unit against ₹1.61 last year, while non-solar-hour prices rose to ₹5.3.

Crisil said the increase indicated "heightened demand-supply stress outside daylight hours", even as solar generation helped prevent a steeper rise in average market prices.

According to Crisil Intelligence, the demand surge was driven by increased use of cooling equipment amid an El Niño-triggered rainfall deficit. Cumulative rainfall across India was 13% below normal between June 1 and August 26.

PRICE DIVERGENCE SHARP



Source: CEA, Crisil Intelligence

Northwest, central and southern regions saw rainfall deficits of 6%, 14% and 29%, respectively, during August 6-12.

The pressure also spilled into short-term markets. Real-Time Market volumes rose 10.6% to 5,565 million units (MU) from 5,029 MU, while the average market clearing price jumped 30.4% to ₹4.41 per unit.

The Day-Ahead Market price increased 22% year-on-year to ₹4.88 per unit.

For April-August, electricity demand increased around 9.5% year-on-year, compared with just 0.3% growth in the corresponding period last fiscal, underscoring the sharp acceleration in consumption this year.

Generation rose broadly in line with demand. Total power generation increased about 12.6% to 180 BU in August. Renewable energy generation jumped nearly 27%, supported by 16.3 GW of renewable capacity additions between April and July, while coal-based generation rose 13%. Coal's share in total generation increased to 63% from 62% a year earlier.

Hydropower generation, however, declined about 9% amid weak rainfall. Energy content at 31 reservoir-based hydropower projects stood at around 22 BU as of August 30, below about 25 BU a year earlier and the full-reservoir potential of roughly 34 BU.

Higher coal generation also drew down inventories. Thermal plants held 29 million tonne (MT) of coal as of August 30, down from 50 MT a year earlier.

Stock cover fell to nine days from 17 days, while average daily coal requirement increased to 3.10 MT during April-August from 2.97 MT a year ago.

Crisil expects power demand to rise 7.5-8.5% year-on-year to 1,840-1,850 BU this fiscal, driven by stronger cooling demand amid higher temperatures and lower rainfall. "Going forward, the trend in peak demand and the sensitivity of short-term market prices to temperature variations will remain key watch-points," it said.

Mundra operations resume as operators call off strike

NANDINI OZA
Ahmedabad, September 10

EMPTY YARD CONTAINER operators on Thursday called off their 13-day old strike against Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ)'s decision to freeze empty yard codes located outside the port and SEZ limits. This brought operations back to normal at Mundra, the country's busiest port.

The Mundra Empty Container Yards & Allied Services Provider Association (MECYASA) told the stakeholders in an internal communication that it had decided to resume operations with immediate effect.

Narendra Joshi, a freight forwarder and a partner of an empty container yard, said the message was received on Thursday morning. The operations resumed from 10 a.m.

The message further said that a detailed trade advisory, duly reviewed and approved by the legal team, would be issued shortly with complete information and further guidelines. Seeking cooperation, the Association said the transporters, empty depots, freight forwarders, and stakeholders may resume their regular operations. In a circular issued by Adani Ports and Logistics on August 21, the company said the move is aimed at reducing road congestion, improving vehicle turnaround, and strengthening safety and security, besides addressing what it describes as misuse of empty-depot codes.

It highlighted that instances of misuse of the empty depot codes were brought to its notice.

From the intervening night of September 1-2, Kandla Mundra Container Transport Association (KMCTA) had extended support to the empty yard and stopped picking up empty containers. Bhagirathsinh Jadeja, president of KMCTA, told *FE* that the loss incurred during the strike may run into crores of rupees. Several meetings were held between the stakeholders. Jadeja claimed they had also put pressure on the shipping lines for intervention. "As it is, the business has suffered due to the Hormuz crisis," he remarked.

One key meeting in Mumbai on September 7 was chaired by DG (Maritime Administration).

Mumbai bound flight delayed for 3.5 hrs after pilot falls 'sick'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Varanasi, September 10

A MUMBAI-BOUND INDIGO flight from Varanasi was delayed by three hours and a half on Thursday after the pilot scheduled to operate it suddenly "reported sick", following which the airline made alternative arrangements, sources said.

Flight 6E-6544 was scheduled to fly from the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport to Mumbai.

Airport Director Puneet Gupta said the flight was delayed by three hours and a half due to technical reasons and was later operated to Mumbai. He denied reports of passengers creating a ruckus at the airport.

The airline, however, said the delay occurred after the pilot assigned to the flight suddenly called in sick.

"This led us to make alternative arrangements and rush in another pilot who later flew the plane," a source in the airline told PTI over the phone.

Another source said, "The pilot who replaced the sick pilot came from Ahmedabad as Varanasi is not our base station. The flight was delayed by three hours and a half." "Since alternative arrangements had to be made, this caused some delay, but then the passengers were informed of the reasons and served refreshments," the source added.

The plane eventually departed for Mumbai after the alternative arrangements were made.

Govt starts DILRMP 3.0 with ₹565.5-cr outlay

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, September 10

THE GOVERNMENT ON Thursday launched the operational guidelines for the third phase of the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP 3.0), with an outlay of ₹565.5 crore for 2026-31, aimed at integrating land records, maps, registrations and related data through a GIS-based digital framework.

Launching the guidelines, Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the programme would move beyond digitisation of individual records

towards an integrated land management system.

"Land is not just a piece of soil, it is the pride of our farmers, the blessing of our ancestors and the identity of future generations," Chouhan said.

Under DILRMP 3.0, each state will be able to develop its own "land stack" by integrating land-related datasets and systems through APIs.

These state-level stacks will form the building blocks of a federated national land stack, enabling interoperability while retaining ownership and control of data with the authorities concerned.

The programme will also assign a 14-digit Bhu-Aadhaar, or Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN), to every land parcel and provide for full georeferencing of cadastral maps.

As part of the initiative, 75 high-footfall sub-registrar offices will be modernised as "registration seva kendras", modelled on passport seva kendras.

The government will also focus on scanning legacy land records, creating a registration repository and computerising revenue courts. The NAKSHA initiative for urban land mapping will support the preparation of urban property cards.

Chouhan said DILRMP 3.0 would help farmers access institutional credit and reduce the need for repeated visits to government offices.

The earlier phases of DILRMP have digitised 99.9% records of rights and 97% cadastral maps, while 99% of sub-registrar offices have been computerised, according to the government.

Apparel retail growth to moderate

INDIA'S ORGANISED APPAREL retail sector is projected to grow 12-13% this fiscal, moderating from the 15% growth recorded in the previous year, as consumers increasingly spread discretionary spending across categories beyond clothing, a report said on Thursday.

Revenue growth has been broadly steady so far in the high single digits between April and August 2026, but has largely been driven by the value-fashion segment, Crisil Ratings said in the report.

PTI