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Barbara Khol

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Colombia: Plans To Expand Power Generation Capacity; Time Change

by Barbara Khol

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On April 29 in a nationwide TV and radio broadcast, President Cesar Gaviria said electricity rationing will continue throughout most of the year. The president announced that construction of the El Guavio reservoir, the nation's largest, is to be accelerated. By late 1992, the El Guavio hydroelectricity plant will be partially operational, and supplying 200,000 kilowatts. Another 150,000 kw will come on line via a link with neighboring Venezuela's power grid. Next, the state-run oil company Ecopetrol is building a 50,000 kw thermal power plant in southwestern Colombia. Existing power companies are to be upgraded, and residential use of natural gas increased. Energy and Mines Ministry said the rationing will continue at least through June. Water levels at the nation's principal hydroelectric plant reservoirs are down by 84%. On April 30, government officials announced plans to set the clock forward an hour in order to ameliorate the impact of nine or more hours per day of power rationing. The time change was set to take place at 12 a.m. May 1. [Prior to May 1, dusk occurred at 17:30 or 5:30 p.m. local time.] The minimum power shutdown is from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 5:00 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 04/29/92; Notimex, 04/30/92; Spanish news service EFE, 05/01/92)

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