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Cuba: Severe Electricity Shortage

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On July 8, the government's domestic news service (Agencia de Informacion Nacional-AIN) reported that a break in the main power transmission line running the length of the island, and fuel shortages at electricity generation plants have caused blackouts since July 6 in La Habana, Guantanamo, Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Camaguey, Cienfuegos, Matanzas and Villa Clara departments. The rupture in 220-kilowatt transmission line between Villa Clara and Matanzas occurred on Monday. The line links all the island's power generation plants. Completed 20 years ago, the power grid was one of the government's most important cooperation projects with the former Soviet Union. Later on Wednesday, Jorge Carballo, director of the Despacho Nacional de Carga Electrica, said the break had been repaired on Tuesday. He added that electricity blackouts caused by breakdown in the main transmission line were concentrated in the eastern and central regions. In its July 8 issue, daily newspaper Granma reported that the blackouts caused by transmission line break were in addition to electricity rationing "planned in all provinces to adjust consumption to fuel availability at power generation plants." The newspaper said that most equipment repairs are not possible in the short term, and priority for power distribution will be given to hospitals, refrigeration facilities, water pumping, tourism areas, communications, pasteurization plants, and "other essential activities." (Sources: Notimex, 07/06/92; Agence France-Presse, Spanish news service EFE, 07/08/92)

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