

Beijing Power Reaches New High in Heat

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BEIJING - Daily power consumption in Beijing set a new record high this week as residents cranked up air conditioning amid sweltering summer heat, nearing the limits of its generating capacity, the government said Thursday.

More than 60,000 companies in the city of 15 million people gave employees time off or shifted work schedules to reduce the strain on generating stations, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The Chinese capital used 10.58 million kilowatts of power on Wednesday, near its safe maximum generating capacity of 10.6 million kilowatts, Xinhua said, citing city officials.

General manager of the Beijing Power Company Li Yifan said power use on Thursday was expected to soar to 10.75 million kilowatts, according to Xinhua.

Power consumption in China has soared this summer as the country struggles to cope with temperatures reaching 110.

Major cities have ordered shopping malls, hotels and other businesses to save power by turning up thermostats, shutting down lights and shifting work to night shifts.

Air conditioning consumes about one-third of Beijing's power supply, according to Xinhua.