

# China county institutes blackouts to save energy -media

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BEIJING, Sept 6 (Reuters) - Traffic lights have been turned off and power supply to hospitals, schools, and residents disrupted in turn for almost 10 days in Anping county, Hebei province to reduce energy use, a state broadcaster reported.

China has seen frequent power outages in the past as demand outstrips supply, but the latest development underscored how the central government's energy efficiency drive could be distorted by local governments far beyond Beijing's reach.

With rising complaints over the move, the Anping government has promised steady power supply to schools, hospitals, wastewater treatment facilities, road lamps and traffic lights, China National Radio reported on its website ([www.cnr.cn](http://www.cnr.cn)).

Anping was forced to introduce the measures as the county's power consumption was down only 0.9 percent in the first half, far short of a target a 6.6 percent reduction for this year, local government officials were quoted as saying.

The local power department expects new power use restrictions and energy-saving initiatives to be introduced as current measures like 22-hour power outages every three days were not enough to fulfill energy saving goals, the broadcaster reported.

"It was ridiculous (for Anping) to implement uniform power restrictions regardless of users, as the (central) government's intention was to improve efficiency," Pan Jiahua, a researcher with China Academy of Social Sciences was quoted as saying.

China has pledged to cut energy intensity -- the amount of fuel needed to generate each unit of gross domestic product -- by 20 percent within five years from the 2005 level, but the indicator rose 3.2 percent on the year in the first quarter after falling for the past four years, putting the goal in danger.

That prompted the central government to rush out a series of measures including closing outdated production capacity, hiking power prices for energy-intensive firms and issuing administrative orders to regions and industries.

(Reporting by Jim Bai and Tom Miles; Editing by Jonathan Hopfner)

<http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFTOE68502L20100906>