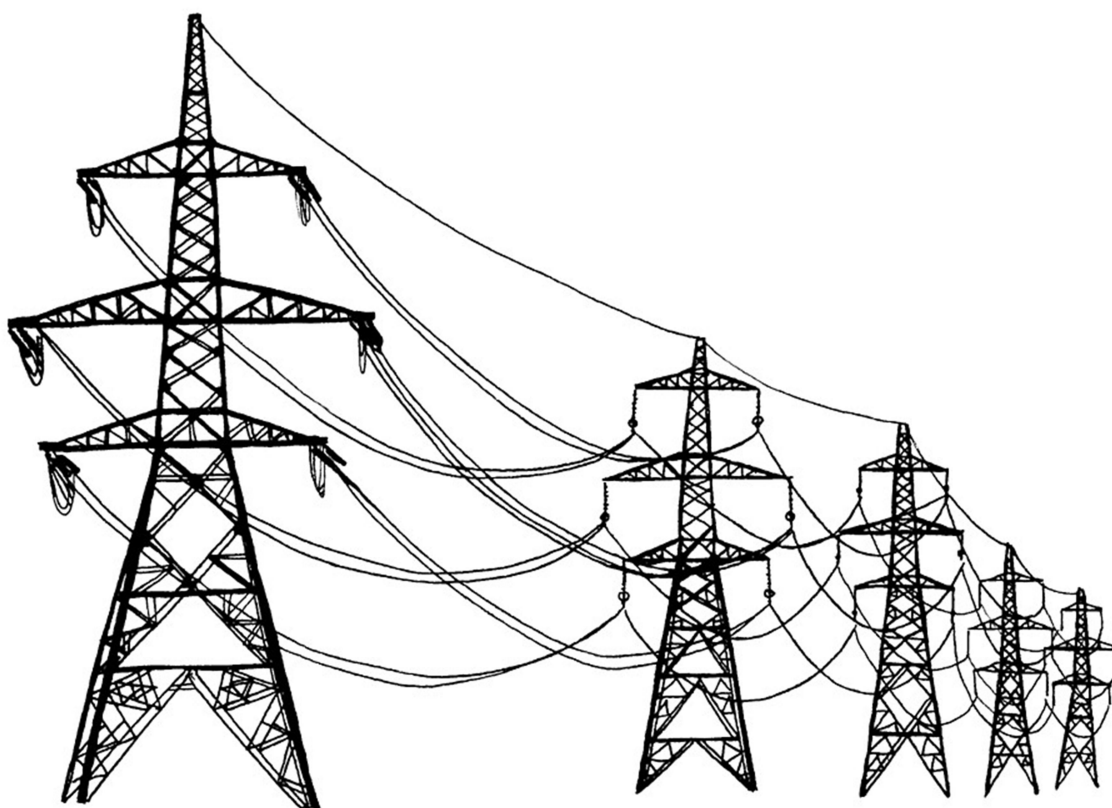


# NEWSCLIPPINGS

**JULY TO DECEMBER 2018**

## ELECTRICITY



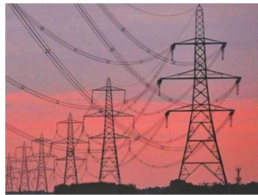
## Urban Resource Centre

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## NEPRA increases K-Electric's multi-year tariff by Rs0.05

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra) has turned down a plea of K-Electric for a significant hike in its multi-year tariff and raised it just by Rs0.05 per unit.



Earlier, the regulator had set the tariff for K-Electric – a private power utility – at Rs12.07 per unit on March 20, 2017, but it did not satisfy the company that filed a review petition for jacking up the tariff. In its decision, the regulator increased the tariff by Rs0.70 to Rs12.77 per unit, which was still far below the tariff sought by K-Electric.

### Karachi power supply to improve by May 20, claims K-Electric

Then the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) wrote a letter to the regulator, suggesting a further increase in the tariff as a low rate would prove to be a challenge to financial viability of the company.

"The tariff determined by Neptra should not only ensure that K-Electric is able to provide adequate services for its customers, it should also offer an environment conducive to investment to encourage future privatisations as well as expand private sector's footprint in the power sector," the ministry emphasised in the letter.

K-Electric had demanded that the tariff should be set at Rs16.10 per unit, but the regulator did not agree and finally raised it only by Rs0.05 to Rs12.82 per unit.

In its decision, Neptra also dismissed a plea for recovery of Rs16 billion worth of losses from power consumers. It also stopped the receipt of Rs8 in bill collection charges and Rs7 in meter rent.

The new multi-year tariff is applicable from July 2016 to June 2023.

Industry officials, however, caution that the regulator's decision is expected to destabilise the company's financial and operational vision and has caused alarm among industrial circles that fear disruption in a smooth supply of electricity.

Industrial and business experts have time and again raised concerns that an inadequate tariff will lead to deterioration in services provided by the mega city's sole power utility.

### NEPRA slashes power rates by Rs1.86 per unit

Any policy decision that affects sustainability of the company will have a cascading effect on all sectors of the society, they say. The lower-than-expected multi-year tariff has also put a question mark over the agreed sale of K-Electric's majority stake to Shanghai Electric Power for \$1.77 billion – a deal that has been thrown in doubt due to a protracted tariff-setting process. This will deprive Karachi and its power infrastructure of critical investment that is required to take the company to the next phase in the provision of quality services.

Leading banks had told Neptra at a hearing that the determined tariff would undermine K-Electric's ability to raise financing for ongoing and future power projects.

Relevant stakeholders pressed the regulator to carefully assess possible repercussions of the revised tariff as a lack of investment would have far-reaching implications, particularly for the industrial consumers of Karachi, who had been to date enjoying exemption from outages.

According to experts, the privatisation of the power utility was a landmark achievement for the federal government and that a large international player is interested in acquiring the company reflects the company's performance over the years.

(By Zafar Bhutta The Express Tribune, 10, 06/07/2018)

## Power breakdown

HOW normal is it for the national grid to experience a breakdown so immense that the country's largest city, along with several other smaller cities and large swathes of rural areas, are plunged into darkness for almost eight hours? This is what we just witnessed in Sindh and Balochistan and it is something which occurs with distressing regularity in many parts of the country. In May, a similar power breakdown triggered by a fault in a switchyard at the Guddu thermal power station led to another large swathe plunging into darkness for a prolonged period, this time in Punjab. In both cases, it was the transmission grid that was at fault.

These incidents happen every year. An inquiry is ordered, a report is produced, cosmetic action is taken and the matter is forgotten and buried. All this shows that the staff in the power bureaucracy has no concept whatsoever of the importance of their job, and the scale of their responsibilities. They are merely killing time, and appear far more focused on internal rivalries and perks instead of the service that they are required to perform. Such power outages that impact the lives of tens of millions of people in the country are proof that the growth and evolution of the power system has moved beyond the capacity of the government bureaucracy to manage, calling into question the latter's ability to carry out its responsibilities in the future. The new government should make it a priority to ensure that power-sector reforms are carried out to gradually minimise the role of the government bureaucracy in the future running of the sector. The blueprint for how this ought to be done was drawn up a long time ago. It includes bringing in outside management into the distribution companies, changing their boards, and moving towards market pricing for power. Without such measures, the power system will continue to degenerate, giving us more spells of large-scale breakdowns and a skyrocketing circular debt. It is time to change.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 19/08/2018)

### **Amputation of minor's arms: K-Electric, victim's family reach agreement**

K-Electric (K-E) and the family of the eight-year-old child, who lost his limbs after they were burned by fallen high tension wires, finally agreed to settle the matter out of court, the Sindh High Court (SHC) was informed on Wednesday. The agreement stipulates that the case against K-E will be dropped in exchange of payment of financial incentives and treatment costs.

The court also accepted the bail plea of the seven arrested K-E officers and ordered them to submit surety bonds of Rs50,000 each. It further ordered K-electric to pay the family Rs25,000 each month, which will increase by 5% every year. K-E is also required to pay an amount equivalent to 300 units of electricity every month and bear the cost of the child's treatment. In turn, the case by the complainant, Umar's father, will be withdrawn.

The high court ordered the investigation officer to present this agreement in the subordinate court, where the case is being heard. Justice Salahuddin Pahnor remarked that the court's order will not affect the Senate proceedings.

#### **Amputation of minor's arms: K-Electric says not responsible for incident**

On August 24, both arms of the eight-year-old child, Umar, were badly burnt as electricity wires fell on him in Ahsanabad due to K-E negligence. The child's arms had to be amputated by doctors at the Burns Ward of Civil Hospital Karachi to save his life. Umar's father had subsequently registered a case against K-E in which the management and officials of K-E Gadap Town had been named as suspects.

Earlier, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah had also directed the health department to make necessary arrangements for the treatment of the child.

A report by the District East assistant commissioner, filed to the deputy commissioner, had held the KE responsible for Umar's misfortune and suggested that the power utility be made to bear all of the treatment and education costs till he graduated.

The assistant commissioner recommended that the utility provider must pay Rs1million to the affected family immediately. The official had also recommended that the power company bear the expenses of Umar's treatment, prosthetic arms as well as his education until graduation. It also asked the federal and provincial governments to make the child's future secure through saving certificates amounting to Rs5 million.

#### **K-Electric under fire as child loses arms to high tension wire**

##### **Missing persons**

The SHC summoned a report from the Sindh inspector-general (IG), interior ministry, director-general (DG) Rangers and other officials on October 17 regarding the recovery of 120 missing persons.

A two-member bench headed by Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto heard the appeal pertaining to the recovery of the more than 120 missing persons. The court declared the police reports unsatisfactory and ordered the police and law enforcement agencies to take practical steps for the recovery of missing persons.

Justice Phulpoto remarked that a citizen, Abdul Ghaffar, had been missing since 2014 and while six investigation officers have been changed, the police officers have not done anything apart from paper work. He said that the court is concerned with the recovery of missing persons and things will not proceed with mere statements. He also remarked that from now an order would be given to register a case against the station house officer (SHO) of the area from where a person goes missing.

The court handed over the investigation of the 5-year-old girl who has been missing since 2011 to the additional IG.

Advocate Qadir Khan Mandokhel called for investigation of ASH administration in the case of missing person, Feroz Khan. Khan was admitted to ASH and later went missing. He argued that Abbasi Shaheed Hospital (ASH) was under the control of terrorists and any opponents admitted there were often killed by administering injections. The court summoned a reply from the medical officer of the hospital on the petition of Khan's missing case.

##### **Punishment upheld**

The SHC rejected the appeals of the convicted person against the punishment awarded to them in the police encounter and attempted murder case. A two-member bench heard the appeal against the seven years imprisonment.

A case of police encounter was registered against Noman and other culprits in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal police station. According to the police, Noman had been injured while two of his accomplices were killed during the encounter. A subordinate court announced the punishment after guilt was established.

##### **VIP security**

The court postponed the hearing of the petition related to the provision of security to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari due to the absence of his lawyer, Akhtar Hussain. A two-member bench headed by the SHC Chief Justice Ahmed Ali Sheikh heard the case.

The written order of the SHC regarding the security of the VIP political personalities was presented in the court in which the Supreme Court (SC) had directed to provide security to the people under threat according to the law. Bilawal argued in the

petition that his life was in danger and requested for security to be provided. The petition maintained that his mother had been assassinated and that militant organisations had issued open threats to the PPP. It also stated that the militant organisations had already carried out multiple attacks against PPP leaders. The petition said that Bilawal has to tour Pakistan due to political commitments and thus requested the court to direct the federal and all provincial governments to provide security.

#### Vote recount

Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) filed a petition in the SHC requesting for a recount in NA-241, PS-126 and PS-130 constituencies. The petition was filed by Moeen Amir Pirzada, Asif Ali and Jamal Ahmed. The petition alleged that votes were manipulated through rigging. The petition also stated that the party's polling agents were evicted and the process of counting was carried out illegally in their absence.

(By Nasir Butt The Express Tribune, 04, 20/09/2018)

### Violence in schools

The writer is a lawyer with a special interest in human rights issues and violence and criminal practices against women and children

On August 5, 2018, the Supreme Court of Pakistan took suo-motu notice of a torture incident. Ten-year-old Zohaib was brutally beaten by a religious cleric for allegedly stealing a few rupees from a mosque in Sheikhpura, Punjab. This inhuman phenomenon, known as corporal punishment, is a daily occurrence for some children — at workplaces, homes and educational institutions.

Editorial  
& Opinion

The use of corporal punishment to 'discipline' children is deeply entrenched in tradition and societal attitudes. It is considered a normal part of childhood and openly acknowledged as a right of parents or others in charge. Children already discriminated against based on poverty, disability, caste and ethnicity are more likely to suffer corporal punishment.

Pakistan is one of 92 countries trying to eradicate corporal punishment and has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires states to protect children from all forms of violence. There has been progress in the form of numerous laws that prohibit corporal punishment of children in schools as well as family settings. However, cultural acceptability often encourages weak enforcement of the existing laws and perpetrators are rarely held accountable. Additionally, this brutal practice has legal sanction under Section 89 of the Pakistan Penal Code as a means to correct the behaviour of children under 12 years of age.

According to a survey conducted by the Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) in collaboration with Alif Ailaan, 70% of teachers in Pakistan endorse corporal punishment. According to a report by the United Nations, it is widely practised in educational institutions in Pakistan, in at least 40% of government schools, 35% of private schools, as well as in religious schools.

Just this year, there have been numerous cases of physical violence against children. Last month, an eight-year-old girl was tortured and hung with a rope as punishment by a cleric of a religious school in Multan. In the same month, a seven-year-old boy died three days after being brutally beaten with an iron rod by a religious school teacher in Lahore. In May, a viral video showed a principal beating male students at a cadet college. And so goes on. What gets reported in the press may just be the tip of the iceberg. A large number of cases are missed due to lack of monitoring and cultural acceptability that deems these acts routine.

Corporal punishment results in physical injury and can even lead to death. However, it must also be noted that this form of violence can have ever-lasting consequences on a child's personality, perpetuating a vicious cycle of violence. According to a report by the PLAN International, corporal punishment boosts violent behaviour and is associated with assaults on spouses, depression and high drop-out rates from school harming future prospects. Therefore, ending this inhuman practice is not only a matter of children's fundamental human rights, but also integral to reducing the level of violence in societies.

In order to effectively enforce legislation pertaining to corporal punishment, the government must repeal all conflicting laws such as Section 89 of the PPC. Other laws need to be amended for effective enforcement. There must be a clear and explicit statement in law banning physical and mental violence in all settings. There is a need to introduce training programmes for teachers in alternative disciplinary measures and positive reinforcement techniques. There is also a need to set up a monitoring system to ensure that such abuse is reported and perpetrators are held accountable. Most importantly, there is a need for an attitudinal shift. Awareness campaigns against the prevailing culture and detrimental effects of the practice must be significantly bolstered.

Assault on adults is a criminal offence all over the world. Why is that the most vulnerable and helpless segment of our society should have less protection from assault than adults? A child will never learn with the threat of violence. We need to put a stop to this breach of their fundamental human right to respect for human dignity and physical integrity.

(By Leena Nishtar, The Express Tribune, 16, 27/08/2018 )

### Discos, K-Electric lost over Rs111bn in 2016-17

The country's public sector distribution companies and privatised K-Electric failed to make any major improvement in their performance and remained involved in data fudging and lost more than Rs111 billion due to short recovery of bills and higher than allowed technical losses during 2016-17.

This has been concluded by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepa) in its performance evaluation report (PER 2016-17) based on their data provided by the companies on parameters of technical losses, recoveries, duration of loadshedding, safety standards and consumer complaints. These were examined in relation to their performance in fiscal years 2014-15 and 2015-16 under performance standard rules (PSDR) 2005.

The regulator "noted with concern that fiscal year 2016-17 also did not witness any major improvement in the performance of distribution companies (Ex-Wapda Discos and K-Electric)".

#### *Loadshedding of 8-10 hours observed in urban and 10-12 hours in rural areas*

Similarly, the issue of data correctness as reported in previous PERs could not be addressed by the companies and remained there despite regulator's strict actions against "such fake reporting by the distribution companies" to bring them in compliance with performance standards.

"During FY 2016-17, Nepa continued monitoring activities including data verification and found that the data submitted by the distribution companies is significantly fudged," it said in its latest report, adding that it took serious actions and legal proceedings were initiated against all distribution companies except Multan and Quetta electric supply companies. As a result of these proceedings, major distribution companies like that of Lahore, Gujranwala, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Faisalabad were penalised and proceedings against KE and the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (Iesco) are in progress.

Nepa also expressed "serious reservations over the authenticity of data" regarding loadshedding being carried out by Discos and KE in their respective service territories. The companies in their data provided to Nepa claimed that Discos and KE shed the load from 2 to 4.5 hours daily which cannot be true given the longer periods of loadshedding.

Also, field visits by Nepa teams to different Disco areas observed loadshedding of 8 to 10 hours in urban and 10 to 12 hours in rural areas on certain feeders.

In addition, the regulator also observed that distribution companies were not following the order of loadshedding according to different categories of consumers as provided in PSDR 2005.

#### **Data accuracy**

Mainly because of the issue of data accuracy, Nepa considered only four parameters during the said year for the performance ranking of Discos and KE, namely T&D losses, recovery, timeframe for new connections and safety. The ranking was based on marks for compliance level of set standards and targets given by the regulator.

Based on this, Iesco secured the top slot, followed by Gepco and then Lesco at second and third positions, respectively. Mepco's ranking fell to 4th position due to decline in losses and recovery.

The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company's ranking went down two positions as compared to previous year and has acquired 6th as it failed to provide new connections within specified timeframe to more than 34pc of eligible consumers. K-Electric has acquired 5th position because of improvement in losses and recovery.

On the other hand, the Sukkur Electric Supply Company showed outstanding results from recovery point of view and jumped to 8th position from 10th in 2015-16.

The Peshawar Electric Supply Company retained its 7th position that it secured in 2015-16 while the Hyderabad and Quetta electric supply companies could not make significant improvement and have gone down to 9th and 10th positions, respectively, due to decline in losses and recovery.

The regulator said the analysis of data provided by companies noted with serious concern that during 2016-17, Discos and K-Electric contributed losses of around Rs35bn due to their inefficiency in transmission and distribution (T&D) losses beyond allowed for recovery from consumers and Rs76bn due to less recovery of bills.

The reported figures of T&D losses indicate that except Iesco, none of the Disco could meet the regulator's expectations, particularly Sepco that showed the worst performance among all the Discos in this regard.

Iesco and Lesco achieved 100pc recovery targets while the recovery of Sepco improved from 55.2pc in 2015-16 to 110.8pc in 2016-17. On the other hand, the recovery by Qesco declined from 71.6 in 2015-16 to 43.5pc in 2016-17

Overall, the companies also failed to make any mark in the quality of power supply in terms of voltage and frequency, timeframe for new connections, loadshedding and consumer service complaints. "Additionally, the provision of dubious data remains a major issue," the regulator concluded.

(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 05, 03/09/2018)

### **Whither K-Electric? Protests erupt after father of six electrocuted**

Another man fell prey to the negligence and alleged apathy of the city's sole power supply company – K-Electric – on Wednesday night when he was electrocuted to death as he came in contact with an electric pole in Keamari Town.

The victim, identified as Hazir Khan was a rickshaw driver by profession and was a father to six children.

On Thursday, neighbours and relatives of the victim staged a protest demonstration near the Ghareeb Shah Shrine in Keamari Town's Jackson Market, decrying what they termed as the KE's negligence which resulted in Khan's death. The protesters placed the victim's body in the middle of the road and blocked it for traffic as they shouted slogans against the power utility company and called for strict action against its officials.

#### **Amputation of minor's arms: K-Electric says not responsible for incident**

Complaints regarding electric current flowing through the pole were filed several times with the K-Electric, but no action was taken, said one of the protesters.

Aijaz Khan, a cousin of the deceased, told *The Express Tribune* that Hazir Khan was a resident of Kamela Chowk in Keamari Town and used to drive a rickshaw to support his family, which consisted of his wife and their six children. On Wednesday night, Hazir Khan had parked his rickshaw at around 11pm and was going home after feeding his buffalos when he came in contact with the electric pole. The current racing through the pole gripped his body and he died soon after.

Aijaz added that Hazir's eldest son had a heart condition, while his younger daughter was suffering from a cognitive disorder. "Who will bear the responsibility for these children now?" Aijaz questioned. "Who is responsible for Hazir Khan's death?" He demanded strict action to be taken against those responsible for the incident.

A neighbour of the deceased, Jabbar demanded that the KE's managing director be arrested. "Residents of this area pay all their dues on time, but we still face the brunt of load shedding," he lamented.

Another neighbour recalled that Hazir Khan had also filed complaints regarding the current flowing through the pole, but the KE's staff had paid no heed to the fault, as a result of which a father of six children had to pay the price.

#### **Nine K-Electric officials granted bail before arrest**

Traffic on both sides of Native Jetty Bridge leading to and from Keamari was suspended due to the protest and long queues of vehicles stretched for miles along the thoroughfare. A large contingent of police reached the spot on receiving reports of the protest and managed to disperse the protesters after negotiations, after which the traffic started flowing.

Hazir Khan was later laid to rest at the Mawach Goth graveyard.

For its part, the K-Electric, in its standard response, issued the following statement regarding the incident: "We would like to express our deepest condolences on the unfortunate incident reported today in the Keamari area of Karachi. According to initial reports no broken wire has been reported or found in the area where the incident allegedly took place. We are investigating the matter."

The KE is already under fire for its response, or lack thereof, in the case of a young boy whose arms had to be amputated after he was burned by high tension wires. A case has been registered by the boy's father against the company for negligence.

#### **Notices served on bail plea of seven K-E employees**

Meanwhile, a Malir additional district and sessions judge issued notices to the investigation officer and government on a bail application filed by seven employees of KE who were arrested in connection with the case of eight-year-old Umar who had both his arms amputated after receiving electric shocks from a high tension wire.

The arrested men include Saeed Ahmed, Muhammad Mushtaq, Mirza Asif Baig, Asif Iqbal, Saqib Hussain, Syed Haider Raza and Muhammad Asim. All the seven men are technical staff of K-E Gadap Town. They have been booked under sections of negligence and dismemberment of human body parts.

The judge also extended the interim bail of nine higher officials of K-E in the case for six days. The officers included Riaz Ahmed Nizamani, Zameer Ahmed Sheikh, Imran Aslam, Saqib Abbas, Nisar Ahmed, Arsalan, Syed Shahnawaz, Raza Hussain Rizvi and Shaukat Mangi.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 07/09/2018)

### **Sessions court rejects bail pleas of seven KE employees**

A Malir additional district and sessions judge, Shafi Muhammad Pirzada, rejected on Friday bail applications of seven K-Electric (KE) employees arrested in a case relating to an eight-year-old boy, Umer, whose arms had to be amputated after he received electric shocks from a high tension wire.

During the hearing on bail pleas, the prosecutors argued that the arrested KE employees were responsible for the incident. The prosecutors claimed that illegal power connections, commonly known as kundas, were made with the connivance of power utility employees who also collect bills for kundas.

It was argued that the KE administration has complete knowledge of power theft through kundas and it charges law-abiding citizens with excessive bills to cover the company's losses, however, when a major accident happens, the administration plays dumb.

The court was informed that due to KE's negligence, a child was deprived of both his arms while one arm of another child, Haris, had to be amputated. According to the prosecutors, evidence suggested that the accident was a result of the negligence of KE employees and hence they should not be released on bail.

### **Amputation of minor's arms: K-Electric says not responsible for incident**

A counsel for the KE, however, contended that no report on investigation from the suspects had yet been submitted to the court. He maintained that the accident resulted due to kundas, for which KE employees could not be blamed. The lawyer added that the power utility had carried out multiple operations in the past to remove kundas but they reemerged.

The KE lawyer argued that if a wire without kundas attached to it breaks, current immediately stops in the wire and no accident can result in such a case.

The judge agreed with the prosecutors' arguments and rejected the bail pleas.

The arrested suspects include Saeed Ahmed, Muhammad Mushtaq, Mirza Asif Baig, Asif Iqbal, Saqib Hussain, Syed Haider Raza and Syed Muhammad Asim, who are members of the technical staff of the KE Gadap Town. They have been booked under sections of the Pakistan Penal Code pertaining to negligence and dismemberment of human organs.  
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 08/09/2018)

### **Major power breakdown hits city**

The city experienced a major power breakdown in the early hours of Tuesday which K-Electric attributed to tripping of the extra high tension network followed by another disruption of power supply from the national grid during the day.

As power to K-Electric from the national grid remained restricted, they carried out load management while including areas that are usually exempt from loadshedding until the power supply was brought back to routine levels in about an hour or two.

A KE spokesperson said: "Load management cycle was kept on rotational basis and timings were communicated to customers via customer services (8119 SMS) and media platforms. All possible efforts were made to manage load without burdening customers." Earlier, the incident of localised tripping is said to have happened due to high humidity levels which caused partial power interruption for four to six hours in parts of Defence, Clifton, Gadap, Saddar, Korangi as well as pockets in Gulistan-i-Jauhar, Landhi, Nazimabad, Garden and Lyari. Supply to most of the affected areas and strategic installations, including key hospitals and water pumping stations, was ensured through alternative circuits.

The KE spokesperson said that the power utility regretted the inconvenience caused to its customers and appreciated their cooperation during this time.

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 15, 03/10/2018)

### **Court accepts request for settlement between KE, amputee's family**

The case of an eight-year-old losing his limbs was settled on Wednesday by a court in Karachi after the victim's family and K-Electric (KE) said they had reached an agreement.



KE representatives and parents of the minor, Muhammad Umer, also informed the court that copies of the settlement had been submitted to the Sindh High Court (SHC).

#### **Amputation case: K-E staffers flee from court after bail plea rejected**

The Malir additional district and sessions judge accepted the request for a settlement between the parties and ordered those arrested in the case be released on bail. The judge said if KE violates the agreement, the court could be approached again.

Umer's arms had to be amputated after a high-tension wire fell on him outside his home on the third day of Eidul Azha. When the wire fell on Umer, he tried to remove it with his other hand, but the high voltage quickly gripped his body and caused severe burns on both arms.

According to his family, Umer was on the way to get groceries when the incident took place. His parents rushed him to the Burns Center at Civil hospital where he underwent surgery. While the doctors were successful in saving the child's life, both his arms had to be amputated.

### **K-E responsible for amputation of minor boy's arms, must pay Rs1m: report**

After the incident, a KE spokesperson said, "As per preliminary investigations, the incident was a consequence of the pervasive kunda wires to extract power through illegal infrastructure by some other elements where this unfortunate incident took place and the innocent child got injured."

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 04/10/2018)

### **Karachi faces third power outage in four days**

For the third time in four many days, the port city plunged into darkness on Thursday morning – this time due to a major fault that developed in the K-Electric's distribution system.

According to KE officials, the disruption in power supply was triggered by a rollover effect, following the disconnection of Karachi's power supply lines from the nation grid in the early on Thursday morning.

### **Many areas in Karachi face hours-long electricity breakdown**

The power utility claimed that the fault was soon rectified power restored to all areas by noon. Reports from several areas of Karachi, however, suggested otherwise, with residents claiming that power in Saddar, North Karachi, Nazimabad, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Lyari and others was yet to be restored by late evening.

Initially, the power supply was also disrupted to major installations such as the airport, Cantt Railway Station, Dhabeji and Gharao pumping stations, public hospitals, Sindh Assembly and Governor House.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, the KE's spokesperson said, "High humidity had caused the tripping of Extra High Tension lines, which was the cause of the previous two breakdowns."

The KE's system often breaks down even with a light drizzle. The cause in such a situation, according to the company's spokesperson, is the conversion of dust particles on EHT lines into sludge.

Meanwhile, Sindh Minister for Local Bodies Saeed Ghani expressed concern over the repeated power breakdowns, which he attributed to the KE's inefficiency. He said that the disruption in power supply causes damage to machinery and results into bursting of water pipelines, further aggravating the city's water crisis.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf lawmaker Khurram Sher Zaman also blamed the KE administration, warning it of strict action if the situation did not improve. He added that the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority had also held KE responsible for the electricity crisis, adding that the power utility company should operate the Korangi and Bin Qasim power plants to generate electricity for its consumers.

Federal Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan said that the prevailing issue of tripping in main transmission lines in the areas of K-Electric and other coastal regions was due to adverse weather conditions. He explained that high moisture in the coastal areas caused technical faults in the main transmission lines, which ultimately led to power outages in Karachi, Thatta and Badin.

### **Amputation of minor's arms: K-Electric, victim's family reach agreement**

Khan directed the authorities to investigate the matter in detail to see if any preventive maintenance was carried out by both the National Transmission and Dispatch Company and the KE. The minister said that strict action will be taken against officials if it was established that the issue was caused due to negligence.

### **Main line bursts again**

The power outage again caused the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's main line to burst. This time, the burst not only disrupted water supply to consumers, but also halted the board's tanker service.

According to a press statement issued by the KWSB, a 72-inch main water line burst due to back pressure after the power outage at Dhabeji pumping station. "This also affected the 300 million gallons of water being supplied to the city," said a KWSB's official.

There were two power breakdowns back to back on Monday morning, which damaged the main water line. Then there was another breakdown on Tuesday, which also burst the water line. Now, another power failure on Thursday, according to the KWSB's press statement, burst another water line measuring 72-inches in diameter.

KWSB MD Khalid Sheikh has issued directives to repair the broken line as soon as possible. However, due to continuous power failures, the KWSB's online water tanker service has been disturbed.

"The hydrants are facing water shortage now," said Sheikh, adding that citizens who book water tankers through mobile applications or phone calls are facing difficulties. The water is now being supplied through alternative sources, according to the press statement.

(By Our Correspondents The Express Tribune, 04, 05/10/2018)

## **Karachi blackouts**

ALL through last week, Karachi saw a series of power outages that left the entire city — including the airport and many hospitals — without electricity. Some of these incidents left the city without electricity for hours on end, and it took almost a full day for power to be restored to several areas — that only plunged back into darkness a short while after. At least three such incidents were reported in the past week that K-Electric blamed on the Extra High Tension line that supplies power to the city from the national grid. All that the residents were told was that 'supply from the national grid to the city is off', without much elaboration on why this might be the case. In another instance, the utility's spokesperson blamed the outage on excess humidity. Meanwhile, the power regulator, Nepra, issued a short press release saying that K-Electric had not invested in its transmission system, and that had left it vulnerable to tripping due to various reasons.

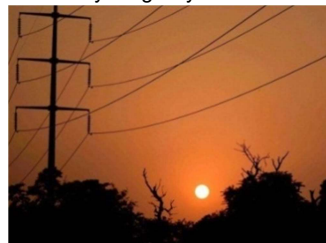
Residents of the city can only guess at what is going on. What is clear is that the outages are not the result of any power shortage, nor any sudden surges or other unforeseeable events. They are, pure and simple, the consequence of a transmission system that is highly vulnerable to vagaries and in dire need of maintenance as well as upgradation. That this situation should exist at a time when K-Electric sponsors enjoy boasting about all that they have invested in the utility and the miraculous turnaround they have brought about in its financial condition is beyond belief. There are no extreme weather events happening around us to put the blame on, and if there are problems with purchases from the national grid, that has in years past caused blackouts of this sort, then K-Electric



should be clearer in stating this. As it stands, the power outages simply underline the fact that there is nobody to care for the city's well-being.  
(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 08/10/2018)

### **KE's faulty wire endangers life of another boy**

Another young boy was electrocuted by a falling high-tension wire in Bin Qasim Town, who is now fighting for life in a private hospital. He was identified as 13-year-old Bakhshal, son of Zafar Shah and is a resident of Shah Latif Town.



According to Bin Qasim Town SHO Arif Razzaq, Bakshal's condition is critical and he is under treatment at the intensive-care unit. However, he said that the family has not contacted the police as yet.

#### **Court accepts request for settlement between KE, amputee's family**

Bakhshal was electrocuted by a falling high-tension wire while riding a bicycle near Al-Hamra Pump in Shah Latif Town. He was severely burnt and injured. The locals tried to provide relief through various remedies but the boy's condition didn't stabilise. The police found the boy unconscious on the road and shifted him to Liaquat National Hospital. Due to severe burn injuries, the boy could not be identified immediately, said Razzaq. The police began investigation on their own as no one had contacted them regarding a missing person even hours after the incident. A message was also circulated on police control.

A K-Electric (KE) spokesperson said that the power utility was "deeply saddened" by the unfortunate incident in Shah Latif Town and that they have extended complete medical support on humanitarian grounds while they investigate the incident in detail. This is the fourth incident of electrocution by a high-tension wire in the past two months.

#### **Amputation case: K-E staffers flee from court after bail plea rejected**

Earlier, two boys were handicapped in two separate incidents of faulty high-tension wires. Eight-year-old Muhammad Umer was electrocuted when a KE high-tension wire fell on him outside his home on the third day of Eidul Azha. He was critically injured as the wire fell on his left arm. He tried to remove the wire with his other hand but the high voltage quickly gripped his body and caused severe burns on both the arms. The boy was taken to Civil Hospital's Burns Centre and both of his arms had to be amputated.

In another similar incident, Haris, 11, lost his both arms as a result of getting electrocuted by high tension wires in August. Haris was admitted to Civil Hospital for a month. His father, Abdul Qayyum, who is a rickshaw driver, said that his son was playing on the roof on July 25 when he slipped and got tangled up with the high tension wires. Haris was shifted to the hospital and the doctors successfully managed to save his life but had to cut off his both arms. He spent one month in the Burns Centre under treatment.

KE also came under fire in September when Hazir Khan, a rickshaw driver by profession, was electrocuted to death as he came in contact with an electric pole in Keamari Town. Khan was a resident of Kamela Chowk in Keamari Town and used to drive a rickshaw to support his family, which consisted of his wife and their six children. On September 5, Khan had parked his rickshaw at around 11pm and was going home after feeding his buffalos when he came in contact with the electric pole. The current racing through the pole gripped his body and he died soon after.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 17/10/2018)

### **Staying on the high wire**

The moment of truth is dawning for the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as the country's top policymaking body — the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet — grits its teeth and helps brace most if not all electricity consumers for free falling at about 120 mph or faster. That is perhaps the best way to describe the ECC's upcoming meeting at which the proposal to approve an increase of up to 26% in power tariff for different categories of consumers is moved forward.

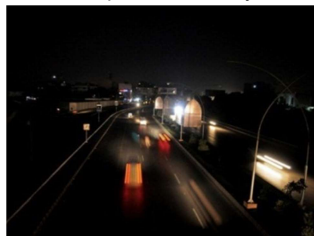
There is no point in squirming over the heat of the possibilities or further delaying the action as it had done earlier on the pretext of the Oct 14 by-elections. The time to bite the bullet is now because any attempt to bite it slowly or a little bit less will not spare us any pain. To begin with, sky-dives cannot be cushioned against the dangers present. But apart from that the PTI government has plenty more to fret about such as where and when will it get the courage to push ahead with its heavy reform agenda. Electricity tariff hikes present a perfect opportunity for a study of political courage. If truth be told, governments in Pakistan do not have a long history for measuring it — which is why the PTI would be treading on new ground. Such a unique opportunity for path-finding on a grand scale should aid and guide not inhibit its steps — at least we hope it will.

We should be more reconciled with the fact also that deeply unpopular decisions are required for Pakistan's welfare and now is probably as a good time as any to take those measures. The new tariffs are going to hurt several segments of society. Our economic managers have made a conscious attempt not to penalise honest customers and recover losses from defaulters while bringing down power-sector losses to within levels permitted by the regulatory body. We should also expect the authorities take adequate measures to guard against any crippling or debilitating effect on the overall economy. This cannot be done without removing inefficiencies, plugging leakages and curbing graft.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 17/10/2018)

## Karachi suffers fourth major power breakdown in October

The metropolis suffered yet another massive power breakdown on Saturday which the K-Electric (KE) attributed to tripping in the national grid.



Residents from across the city started complaining of sudden breakdown of electricity around 12pm. The KE claimed that issues with the national grid transmission line had affected supply.

### Massive power breakdown hits Karachi

The affected areas included Defence Housing Authority (DHA), Clifton, Saddar, Lyari, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Federal B Area, North Nazimabad, Nazimabad, North Karachi, Malir, Landhi and Korangi.

This was the fourth major power breakdown hitting the metropolis in October. Earlier this month, citizens faced three power breakdowns which the KE had attributed to humid weather resulting in the tripping of the extra high tension lines. Residents not only had to brave hot weather without electricity, but suffer a water crisis as the intermittent power breakdown also led to a burst in the main water supply line. The Karachi Water and Sewage Board (KWSB) had said that a 72-inch main water trunk burst due to the water's back pressure after the power failure in the morning on October 1, at the Dhabeji pumping station. The line was repaired by October 2 evening. However, there was another power breakdown which led to a burst in another water line on the morning of October 2.

According to one citizen, who asked not to be named, the disruption of KE's system has become routine since the past many years and affects the lives of the city's residents even when there are small changes in weather. "Such frequent power breakdowns never happen in any other place as they happen in Karachi," she said.

### Karachi hit by power breakdown as national grid line trips

Khurram Ali, a resident of Clifton, had said that the power utility company should focus more on producing their own indigenous electricity to meet the demands of Karachi rather than relying on the national grid. "If KE is efficient in taking bills and carrying out load-shedding, then they should also be efficient in providing residents of the port city uninterrupted power supply," he said. The KE, in a statement issued on Saturday, said that power supply to the city was restored to routine levels after the interruption following the trip in the transmission line of the national grid.

The sudden disruption in supply to the city from the national grid had a rollover effect on the local circuits serving Karachi. Power was restored by the national grid whereas KE's plants landed safely in 'Island Mode' that helped catalyse the restoration process and most of the affected areas were restored swiftly.

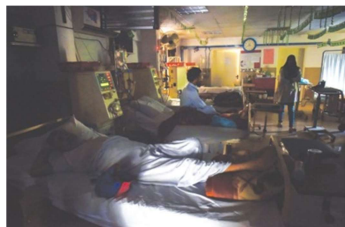
The power utility maintained close coordination with the concerned authorities during this time, the KE statement read.

According to a KE spokesperson, "Continuous investments and upgrades in the system have resulted in greater network resilience and turnaround efficiency to ensure system stability and faster restoration. KE has invested over \$2 billion since 2009 across the entire value chain whereas around \$500 million was invested alone to expand and rehabilitate its transmission network.

Moreover, a \$450 million Transmission Enhancement Project (TP-1000) is also underway to further enhance the transformation capacity and improve reliability of power supply."  
(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 05, 21/10/2018)

## Massive power breakdown hits Karachi once again

Karachi suffered another major power breakdown on Saturday — the fourth such incident in recent weeks — due to what K-Electric claimed was "sudden tripping in transmission line of the national grid".



The areas affected included Malir, Landhi, Korangi, blocks of Gulshan-e-Iqbal and Gulistan-e-Jauhar, North Karachi, Federal B. Area, Defence, Clifton and others.

The power disruption took place a little after 12pm and took more than two hours to restore. Although the power utility called the fresh breakdown a "brief interruption", there was no word from the regulatory body — the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) — on the fourth such incident in the country's commercial capital in recent weeks.

"Power supply to the city has been restored to routine levels after a brief interruption following tripping in transmission line of the national grid," said a KE statement. "The sudden disruption in supply to the city had a rollover effect on local circuits serving Karachi. Power was restored promptly by the national grid whereas KE's plants landed safely in 'island mode' that helped catalyse the restoration process and most of the affected areas were restored swiftly."

### CM Murad Ali Shah takes notice of frequent power failures in the metropolis

It said that the power utility maintained close coordination with the authorities concerned during this time.

Saturday's power failure came as a reminder of Oct 4 breakdown when Karachiites remained without electricity for hours and KE came up with an excuse blaming the breakdown on "adverse weather conditions resulting in abrupt disconnection of power supply". Following the Oct 4 breakdown, Federal Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan had directed the authorities to investigate the matter in detail to see if any preventive maintenance was carried out by both the National Transmission & Despatch Company (NTDC) and KE to avoid such a situation.

However, there was no word since then on the fate of the "investigation" and impact of his directives to KE.

The power utility on the other hand claims to have massive investment to strengthen its infrastructure and ensure system stability and faster restoration.

"Continuous investments and upgrades in the system have resulted in greater network resilience and turnaround efficiency to ensure system stability and faster restoration," said the KE statement. "The KE has invested over \$2 billion since 2009 across the entire value chain whereas around \$500 million was invested alone to expand and rehabilitate its transmission network. Moreover, a \$450m Transmission Enhancement Project (TP-1000) is also under way to further enhance the transformation capacity and improve reliability of the power supply."

The people of Karachi, however, have yet to taste the windfall of such a huge investment by KE as after suffering consistent poor service during summer, recent episodes suggest hardly any positive change in their experiences even during the approaching winter.

#### **CM irked by frequent breakdowns**

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Saturday took notice of the power breakdown in the city and asked the provincial energy minister to contact the KE management and restore power supply in Karachi.

"Such breakdowns increase problems for the people in the city as well as badly affect the economy and economic activity," the chief minister said in a statement.

He also asked the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board to ensure uninterrupted water supply to all parts of the teeming metropolis as per schedule.

#### **JI demands judicial commission**

The situation has also pushed the political forces to question KE's performance and demand authorities' intervention.

"We demand a judicial commission to investigate all loot and plunder and poor performance of the KE," city chief of the Jamaat-i-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rehman told a press conference here at the Idara Noor-i-Haq. "A recent article in a foreign newspaper has exposed the nexus between KE and the ruling class of Pakistan which has only returned sufferings to people of Karachi. It has also proved our campaign against the power utility which we have been running for the last more than a year," he said.  
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 15, 21/10/2018)

### **PM orders crackdown on electricity theft, line losses**

The government on Monday ordered a countrywide crackdown on electricity theft and line losses in a bid to create an acceptable environment for a proposed 20 per cent increase in power tariff later this week.

This was the crux of two related meetings — one presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan and the other by Finance Minister Asad Umar — on Monday.

The prime minister decided to launch an immediate crackdown on electricity theft, saying "it is unacceptable to make people pay for the cost of theft and mismanagement of others", an official statement quoted him as saying during a meeting of the energy task force.

Finance Minister Umar, while chairing a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet, also "directed the officials concerned to submit a detailed plan for improvement in the power sector, especially measures to increase recoveries and reduction of losses, before the proposed tariff rationalisation plan could be approved". The ECC would meet again on Wednesday to consider the above mentioned plan and tariff rationalisation proposals".

#### ***Finance minister seeks detailed plan for power sector improvement before approving tariff rationalisation plan***

Informed sources said the ECC took up for discussion the proposed increase in electricity tariff for the eighth time in less than two months.

The finance minister told the power division that the increase in rates alone would not be enough to address cash flows of the power sector and circular debt would resurface. Therefore, he said, it was important that people should know what steps were being taken for recovery of arrears, reduction in losses and improvement in governance of the power sector when they were given the price shock because his party had been talking about all these things over the past four-five years.

According to the sources, the power division secretary told the meeting that steps were being taken to improve recoveries and reduce theft and losses.

The finance minister said that then such a plan should be made part of the proposal for tariff increase so that it could be presented to the prime minister for approval and public concerns were also addressed while announcing price hike. He asked the power division to get back to the ECC on Wednesday after incorporating governance improvement plan in the tariff increase summary. The ECC also reviewed a report of the auditor general on financial and operational issues in the four largest loss-making power distribution companies — Hesco, Pesco, Qesco and Sepco — during 2016-17 and 2017-18. The report highlighted significant areas of the distribution system responsible for line and commercial losses.

The finance minister asked the power division to take remedial measures on shortcomings identified by the auditor general and call heads of these companies to Wednesday's ECC meeting for their direct input.

Mr Umar then took the prime minister into confidence on the subject at the energy task force the meeting. The prime minister ordered immediate steps that should avoid additional burden of power theft and other system losses on consumers.

Mr Khan said it was for the first time that the government was working on a comprehensive energy policy and strategy for 25 years keeping in mind demands of domestic, industrial, commercial and other sectors of economy. The 25-year plan would at the same time also take into account the targets for improved energy mix, full utilisation of indigenous resources and promotion of renewables in an integrated manner to minimise reliance on imported fuels.

The prime minister was told that a special task force had already been set up under the Punjab chief minister to combat electricity theft and the deputy coordination officers concerned would monitor the crackdown on power theft at the district level. PM Khan directed that similar steps be also taken in other provinces on an urgent basis. He asked the power division to ensure supply of quality transformers to the distribution companies which should be involved in the preparation of comprehensive plans for reduction in losses and theft with maximum utilisation of modern technology.

The petroleum division told the meeting that the process of awarding 100 exploration blocks to oil and gas companies in a transparent manner was in final stages to be followed by another 30 blocks in due course.

The prime minister ordered provision of foolproof security to the companies involved in exploration of oil and gas in the country and promised that all international investors would be facilitated in Pakistan.

The ECC also discussed a proposal by the power division relating to payment of subsidy for agricultural tube wells in Baluchistan. The power division proposed continuation of the subsidy for another two years involving an additional amount of Rs46-85bn, despite Rs218bn arrears until early this year, and reported that the Balochistan chief minister was not responding to the proposal.

The committee decided to consult the chief minister before taking a decision on the matter.  
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 23/10/2018)

### **Catch power thieves... if you can**

Ostensibly feeling the heat from the Opposition over its decisions to hike gas tariffs, the government has now decided to tackle the power issue a little differently in a bid to raise revenues without raising tariffs: going after power thieves.

Before heading to Saudi Arabia to seek funds to run the cash-strapped and debt-ridden government, Prime Minister Imran Khan chaired a meeting of the energy task force. He was briefed on the current energy situation in the country and plans to devise long-term plans to solve the power crisis, exploration of and exploitation of new gas blocks and using technology curb pilferage. During the meeting, the prime minister directed to find means to lower the power tariffs and to take action against power thieves and a special task force was set up under the Punjab chief minister to stop power theft.

On the surface, this move appears to be an extension of PM Imran's electoral promise of tackling the various forms and ways corruption manifests in the country. But there is a deeper purpose behind this.

The government has faced intense criticism from the combined opposition over its move to raise the gas tariffs. As a result, the government has put off plans to raise the power tariffs.

The simple reason is that the day Imran Khan took oath as the 22<sup>nd</sup> prime minister of Pakistan, it emerged that the circular debt of the power sector had swelled to a whopping Rs1.148 trillion.

This massive circular debt is one of the reasons why Imran feels compelled to go on a fundraising drive to Saudi Arabia for the second time in as many months.

For him, it is clear that the country — rather its citizens — must at least pay the bills they owe. A crackdown on power pilferers is thus, not only apt, but also long overdue.

The challenge, though, would be belling this fat cat, especially given PTI's chequered history of clamping down on power thieves in K-P.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 24/10/2018)

## Power consumers to pay Rs1.60 per unit more

Consumers of ex-Wapda distribution companies (Discos) faced a cumulative increase of about Rs1.60 per unit (14 per cent) in their electricity tariff owing to two separate but simultaneous decisions by the government and the power regulator on Wednesday.

POWER TARIFF FOR DOMESTIC SECTOR	
Slabs (units per month)	Percentage increase
Up to 300	No increase
301 to 700	10pc
701 and above	15pc

After deliberating in at least eight meetings, the government approved Rs1.20 per unit (10.3pc) average increase in base tariff at a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet with a cumulative impact of about Rs124 billion. With the addition of 17pc general sales tax, the total financial burden on consumers will be Rs145bn at the rate of Rs1.40 per unit increase. The average applicable tariff for all Discos would thus increase to Rs12.92 from Rs11.71per unit. The increase in electricity rates is also a must to qualify for an economic bailout package from the International Monetary Fund which had last month urged the authorities to take the tough decision.

Separately, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) allowed a 20 paisa per unit increase in the monthly tariff of Discos on account of fuel price adjustment for electricity consumed in September. The total increase in tariff will, therefore, be Rs1.60 per unit when consumers get bills next month.

### *Tariff for agricultural tube wells reduced from Rs10.35 to Rs5.35 per unit*

The announcement for tariff increase approved at the ECC meeting presided over by Finance Minister Asad Umar was withheld at the last moment in view of Prime Minister Imran Khan's address to the nation.

An official said the ECC decision would be placed before the federal cabinet meeting on Thursday for endorsement and formal announcement. The official said the ECC did not allow an increase in tariff for those consuming up to 300 units per month and also protected the export-oriented industrial sector with a fixed rate of 7.5 cents per unit — Rs9.75per unit at the current exchange rate. A late-night brief statement issued by the power division said the tariff for agricultural tube wells had been reduced from Rs10.35 to Rs5.35 per unit.

It said a 78 paisa per unit increase had been approved for general industrial consumers.

On the other hand, the ECC allowed 10pc increase in tariff for consumers with monthly consumption of 301 to 700 units and 15pc for consumption above 700 units, the official said.

Likewise, the tariff for commercial consumers was increased by 20pc and that for bulk consumers — residential colonies, high-rise buildings, hostels and temporary connections — by 25pc.

Officials said Nepra had determined a total increase of Rs3.82 in average tariff with a total financial impact of about Rs400bn. The regulator observed that after accounting for the existing subsidy allocated in the budget, about Rs2.18 per unit average increase was necessary with an impact of Rs227bn.

The officials said the budgeted tariff differential subsidy stood at Rs179bn. The tariff increase allowed by the ECC would help Disco generate about Rs125bn.

The ECC is reported to have delayed for the time being about Re1per unit increase payable to Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as additional net hydel profit. The impact of this delay was estimated at Rs95-100bn for which the two provinces would be taken on board to work out a staggered adjustment in future.

Nepra took the decision of allowing monthly fuel price adjustment at a public hearing at the request of the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) on behalf of Discos seeking a 44 paisa per unit increase in tariff.

The CPPA had reported that Discos charged consumers a reference tariff of Rs5.12 per unit in September while the actual fuel cost turned out to be Rs5.57, hence it should be allowed to recover 44 paisa per unit additional cost from consumers next month. Nepra did not agree to various components of the reported additional costs and calculated actual fuel price cost at Rs5.32 per unit and approved an increase of 20 paisa per unit. This will yield about Rs2.5bn additional revenue to Discos.

The higher electricity rates approved by the ECC and the regulator would be recovered from consumers in the billing month of November.

(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 25/10/2018)

## Power crisis

FEDERAL Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan's admission before a Senate panel that deep-rooted corruption and inefficiencies were entrenched in the country's power sector was not a revelation. Everyone is aware of how transmission and distribution losses, and increasing power theft across the country, are causing the monthly bills of honest consumers to swell and leading to growing inter-corporate debt in the supply chain. On top of that, distribution firms are unable to recover a hefty amount billed to industrial, commercial and domestic consumers every month. The power-sector debt has spiked to almost 3pc of GDP despite a substantial rise in electricity prices effected under the previous PML-N government to make up for losses suffered on account of system

inefficiencies and theft. A report in this newspaper early this year had quoted Pepco officials as having told the Public Accounts Committee that distribution companies had lost Rs213bn in one year because of line losses. Their stock of receivables from different types of government and private consumers has surged close to 2pc of GDP. So the minister was spot on when he stated no effort to end blackouts could succeed, even if the floodgates of electricity supply were opened. This is exactly what has happened in the last five years.

Indeed, the previous government successfully ramped up the power-generation capacity. Today, we have 'surplus' electricity in the system — thanks to huge public, private and Chinese investment in coal, gas, solar and wind generation over the last four years — because we are not able to use it, although a big chunk of the population still doesn't have access to power. The PML-N's focus on new generation capacity only exacerbated the crisis because it didn't invest in reducing line losses, plugging theft and fully recovering bills. The dollar-based guaranteed returns and (idle) capacity payments to producers have added to the government's financial woes and made electricity unaffordable for industry and domestic consumers. Unsurprisingly, on Wednesday, the PTI administration had to defer to Nepra's demand to increase the price to cut losses. The path to a sustainable power sector and affordable electricity lies in politically tough decisions, starting with an indiscriminate crackdown on big electricity thieves and defaulters. Simultaneously, the state-owned power companies need to be revamped, use of technology encouraged and money invested in the distribution network. The government says it is ready to take hard decisions. But will it walk the talk? That remains to be seen.

(By Editorial Dawn, 08, 25/10/2018)

### **CM Murad wants to generate 250MW of electricity from garbage**

Sindh government directed 'Solid Waste Management Authority' (SWMA) to prepare a policy to generate 250 megawatts (MW) electricity from garbage. "Karachi is generating 17,000 tonnes of garbage every day from which 250MW power could be generated," said Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah while chairing a meeting at the CM House, on Monday.



Shah said that he has consulted experts, and according to them, 50MW power could be generated by feeding 3,000 tonnes of garbage every day. "We generate 17,000 tonnes of garbage and can easily install five plants, each one of 50MW to generate 250MW electricity from garbage," he said.

He directed Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani to prepare a policy to hand over garbage to any private company for power generation and get it approved from the SWMA board. "Invite a private party for installation of a power plant at the Landfill Site at Jam Chakro," he said. He directed Ghani to also allocate a piece of land at Jam Chakro for the power project.

The CM also asked the water board to prepare a proposal for recycling 73 millions of gallons per day (MGD) waste water for industrial purposes. "It is high time to take necessary measures for implementation of the project," said Shah. He directed Planning and Development (P&D) Chairperson Muhammad Waseem to send the proposal to Public Private Partnership (PPP) Unit for the expeditious processing of unsolicited bid as per PPP rules.

It was proposed in the meeting to convert a reverse osmosis (RO) plant installed at Hub into a 100MGD desalination unit. Along this desalination unit, a 900MW regasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) based power plant can also be installed, the experts proposed to the CM. Shah said that he would talk to the federal government to help materialise the project. The electricity to be generated from the plant would be sold to K-Electric (KE). He also issued directives for processing the unsolicited bid process under PPP rules.

Shah was also briefed about the negotiations with Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and Clifton Cantonment Board (CBC) for the installation of a 10MGD desalination plant. A suitable piece of land was being looked for at the outskirts of CBC or DHA for the plant.

The meeting also decided to refurbish the Dhabeji Pumping Station. Shah issued directives for its bidding process under the PPP mode.

Also present at the meeting were the CM's Information Advisor Murtaza Wahab, Principal Secretary to CM Sajid Jamal Abro, Local Government Secretary Khalid Hyder Shah, Sindh Solid Waste Management Authority Managing Director Saeed Mangnejo, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board Managing Director Khalid Shaikh and water and energy experts from the private sector.

(By Our Correspondent The Express Tribune, 04, 06/11/2018)

### **Loadshedding of gas**

There were conflicting reports on Dec 12 with regard to gas supply in the country. On the one hand, National Assembly members were told no gas loadshedding was being carried out, but low pressure was being experienced due to rising winter demand. On the other hand, the SSGC reported that it was ceasing supply to the CNG sector and captive power plants. This is a notification of gas loadshedding coming directly from the source so we are left bewildered by the statements made at the National Assembly session.

The pattern of low gas pressure and increased demand during the winter is observed every year without respite. It is possible the statements made at the NA session were premature. We are well aware that the current government has several Pollyannas

who play the glad game of having highly idealistic views on the dilemmas the country faces in various sectors. However, the reality checks are coming and the PM's comments about taking U-turns resonate with the idealistic strategies sketched out. Loadshedding will affect a couple of sectors but commercial and residential supply will not be stopped while new gas pipelines are installed to improve gas pressure. In actuality, without CNG, commercial activity will be impacted. The other caveat is that supply is being stopped until further notice, which is least reassuring, reiterating that a cloud of uncertainty is usually detrimental to an economy. A protest was hence, expected.

The PTI has been working ambitiously in many sectors for which it deserves credit. Previous governments chose to focus on their own sectors of interest, often where there was money to be made for themselves. Nonetheless, while the PTI has made lots of promises, it has taken upon a lot of 'pressure' with somewhat of a naïve vision about how to deliver on them. We hope the different government departments can work in unison instead of giving conflicting statements, displaying discord within the leadership.

(By Editorial The Express Tribune, 16, 13/12/2018)

### **NCHR demands review of entire Thar coal project**

The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) on Friday expressed its serious concern over environmental hazards being caused by the execution of the Thar coal project. It also expressed its reservations over "growing influence of banned outfits in Thar" and observed that increasing security-related activities in the desert were undermining routine life of local population.

NCHR chairman retired Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan and Anis Haroon shared their views with the media about living conditions, environmental issues, basic facilities including health and education in Tharparkar as observed by its members during a recent visit to the area.

Senior architect and urban planner Arif Hasan, Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) head Karamat Ali and labour leader Ghulam Fatima were also present at the press conference at the Karachi Press Club.

They called for immediate measures by both the federal and Sindh governments to prevent the situation from turning worse.

"The authorities must review the entire Thar coal project from the prism of social benefits for the community and take serious measures to protect the environment," said Justice Chowhan.

"The locals expressed their concern over the way the project is changing the local demography fearing that the resultant social transformation may alter their peaceful environment," he said. "The NCHR calls for concrete measures by the government to check the infrastructural and social change threatening peace and communal harmony in the region," he said.

"An atmosphere of fear prevails there as many security check posts have been established. Local people, besides outsiders, are interrogated by security personnel; and despite all such measures, banned religious outfits were freely operating in Thar with their focus being on conversion and early marriages."

The NCHR leaders shared some facts about an array of coal and electricity generation projects. They pointed out that 9,000 square kilometres of the around 19,000 square kilometre area of Tharparkar had been earmarked for the projects.

The NCHR members noted with concern a wide gap between claims and promises by stakeholders, primarily the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC).

(By The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Dawn, 17, 22/12/2018)