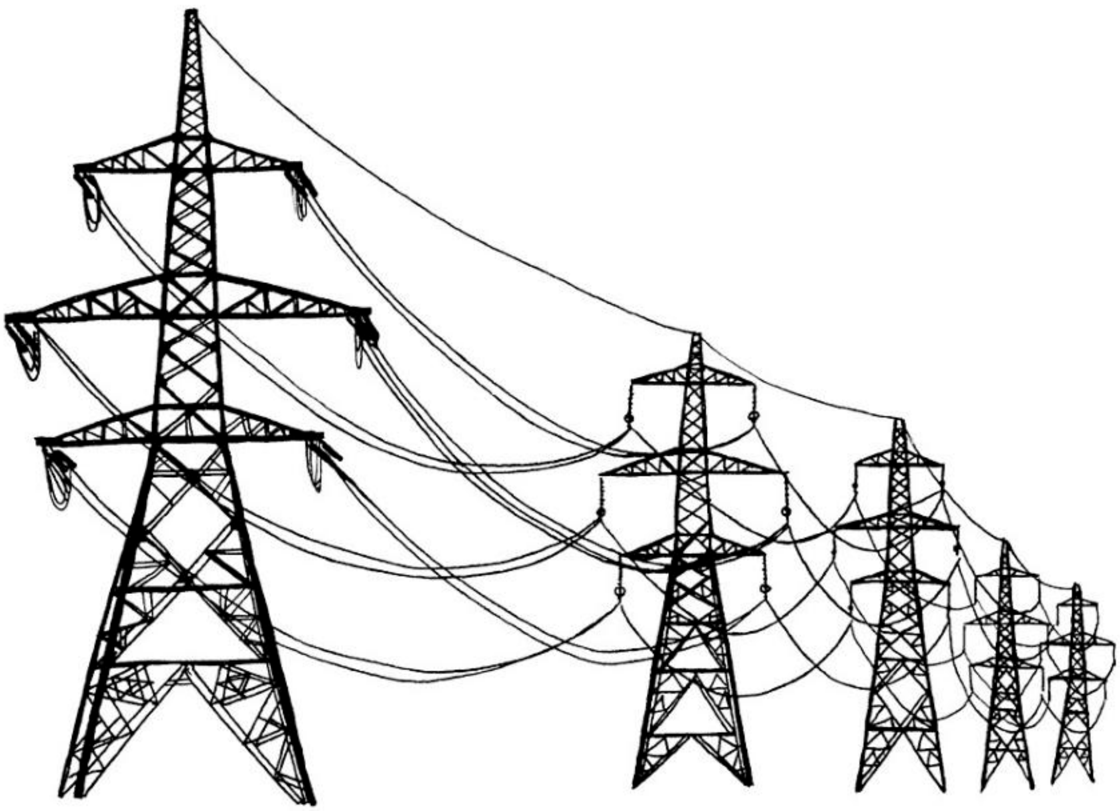
NEWSCLIPPINGS

JANUARY TO JUNE 2025

ELECTRICITY



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High cost of power

The high cost of electricity in Pakistan is a critical challenge that is affecting all categories of consumers – domestic, commercial and industrial. This has not only strained domestic budgets and caused social commotion, but has also affected the national economy, by way of increasing the cost of manufacturing, thereby making our exports uncompetitive in the international market, and hence contributing to our aggravating balance-of-payments problem. Such widespread is this spiral.

At a huge 45 rupees per unit, equivalent to $0.16, the base price of power in Pakistan is far higher than other countries in the region. For perspective, in India, our next door neighbour, a unit of electricity costs 7.11 Indian rupees or $0.084 – which is half as much as ours. While in Bangladesh, our former eastern wing, the power tariff is 12 taka which comes to something around $0.1008.

It is, however, a matter for satisfaction that the authorities have admitted, albeit very late, that by addressing inefficiencies and optimising utiliaation of excess capacity, consumers can be relieved of some financial burden. In a report presented to the government last week, Nepra, the power sector regulator, has revealed that the average net production cost of electricity stands at Rs7.62 per unit. Nepra has proposed a Rs25 per unit cut in the power tariff, suggesting that the government revise capacity payments and eliminate surcharges and, thereby, bring the per unit cost of power to Rs20.04 from Rs45.06.

It's no revelation that illogical capacity charges and inefficiencies in the power sector – reflected in rampant theft, elusive recovery targets and high transmission and distribution losses – are among the factors contributing to a high power tariff in Pakistan. The power tariff, in a way, is also a barometer of governance quality in a country. Thus, by improving governance in power distribution and increasing accountability and oversight, the government can alleviate the unjustified financial burden on electricity consumers.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 06/01/2025)

Power planning

THE National Electric Power Regulatory Authority, the power sector regulator, has rightly blamed poor planning for generation overcapacity, which has made electricity unaffordable not just for residential consumers but also for industry. In a new report, the regulator has noted that "overinvestment in generation capacity to meet peak demand" is one of the key contributors to rising consumer tariffs and a burden on government finances. "Despite the fact that existing installed electric power generation capacity often remains underutilised in Pakistan, the IGCEP (Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan) is developed with the aim to meet the peak demands that occur for less than few hours annually," Nepra said. Other factors driving up consumer tariffs, according to the report, include delays in the expansion of Thar coal power and discouragement of rooftop solar adoption.

At the close of the 2024 fiscal year, the installed generation capacity was 42,512MW while the transmission and distribution network could bear a maximum load of only 25,516MW. That is not all. The maximum demand had peaked to 30,150 MW for a limited duration while the minimum demand stood at 7,015MW. The average annual load served was 18,463MW. In other words, Pakistan still has much more generation capacity than what it actually needs. However, these are the facts that most of us knew and which have widely been discussed. The question is what policymakers and planners can do to find a solution to the challenge of excess generation capacity combined with fluctuating demand and the system's inability to consistently meet maximum demand.

The fact remains that the National Transmission and Despatch Company, one of the power sector regulators responsible for planning future needs of generation, transmission and distribution, has repeatedly proved that it does not have a vision or capacity to predict future demand and requirements. Not just that; a look at the last draft of the IGCEP, a document that projects future demand for the next 10 years, clearly indicates that the NTDC is also incapable of ensuring the development of new generation capacity on least-cost basis. That draft has now been retracted and a new version is being developed. With new developments being reported in renewable energy and battery technology helping slash the installation costs and increasing storage capacity, it is now only a matter of time before solar power disrupts and displaces the national grid. The Nepra report has correctly pointed out that the adoption of solar power should not be seen as a challenge but as an opportunity. The new IGCEP draft should focus on encouraging renewable energy, especially solar, rather than looking towards expensive hydel and dirty coal power. The reliance on fossil fuel-based generation technologies will only make electricity more expensive at the expense of economic progress.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 06/01/2025)

Captive power cut

THE IMF's refusal to relax its demand for discontinuation of massively subsidised gas supplies to mostly inefficient captive power plants owned by wealthy textile producers, in order to eliminate cost distortions between power supply from the national grid and in-house generation, is understandable. Where power supply is a problem, captive power producers would be asked to pay additional Rs1,700-1,800 per mmBtu on top of prevailing LNG prices to strip them of the cost benefits of in-house generation. The condition, one of the key structural benchmarks of the ongoing $7bn funding programme, is aimed at compelling the government to wean the industry off energy subsidies, and encourage factory owners to shift to the national grid to stem falling power production — a major reason for soaring capacity payments to IPPs and unaffordable consumer tariffs. The electricity price subsidies for the industry have mostly been withdrawn under IMF oversight.

On the face of it, the condition appears harsh for exporters, as it would somewhat raise the cost of textile exports. But it isn't. Generous energy and other subsidies doled out to textile exporters over the past several decades have made them inefficient, preventing product diversification and value-addition. Once they are weaned off subsidies, we may see some inefficient industries close down, with others investing in new technologies to stay competitive in the international markets. This action will also give small and medium textile exporters, who can't afford captive power to slash their production costs, a fair chance to compete with the large producers in the market and grow bigger. It should also help divert gas to the much more efficient RLNG-based power generation plants, reducing the burden of growing capacity payments on the national exchequer and consumers. Indeed, the gas

utilities have concerns about the drop in their sales amidst “250 surplus LNG cargoes” that Pakistan must procure under long-term contracts with suppliers. The concerns aren’t totally misplaced, but the growth in demand from the on-grid power sector is expected to significantly offset the gas companies’ projections of losses due to the decrease in demand from the captive power sector. No doubt, it’s a complex situation where stabilisation of one segment of the energy sector is affecting the other. Yet these challenges need to be confronted head-on, sooner rather than later.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 07/01/2025)

No electricity at Civil Hospital for over 24 hours

The largest teaching hospital in Sindh, Dr Ruth KM Pfau Civil Hospital, has been without electricity in most of its units since Tuesday.
The outage has affected functions of the operation theatre, orthopedic, medical, and surgical units since the past 24 hours.

To keep operations working, the hospital administration has been providing electricity to the patients through two 730-kilowatt generators in its premises. Per hospital officials, they have burnt approximately 1,500 liters of diesel, worth over Rs300,000 during the past 24 hours to keep the power going.

Civil Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Khalid Bukhari told The Express Tribune that one of the PMTs (Pole-Mounted Transformer) supplying electricity to the hospital has been faulty for a long time.

The PMT experiences technical issues daily, causing sudden breakdowns in critical areas of the hospital, putting patients' lives at risk during operations.

"Despite writing multiple letters to request the replacement of the PMT, our demands have not been addressed yet," he said.

Dr Bukhari added that one of the PMTs at Civil Hospital developed a fault, resulting in power outages in several units, including the operation theater.

However, electricity was being supplied through the hospital's generators, which consumed a significant amount of diesel and replacement of lubricants.

Dr Bukhari assured that patients and their attendants were receiving uninterrupted power supply.

He further stated that technical issues with the PMT cause sudden power outages in hospital units, necessitating the use of generators to supply electricity to patients. The hospital faces power breakdowns daily.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 30/01/2025)

Solar panels scam

THE scam involving over-invoicing to the tune of more than Rs69bn in the import of solar panels raises many questions regarding the capacity, and willingness, of various links in the import chain — banks and customs authorities, as well as regulatory bodies — to detect and prevent trade-based money laundering as per their responsibility. It also underlines the presence of chinks in our AML/ CFT regime. It is astounding that no one in the chain saw that most companies involved in money laundering did not have the financial capacity to import solar panels on such a large scale. It is unacceptable that the fact that many of them were closely linked to one another and stolen identities were used to pull off the scam, went unnoticed. Astonishingly, the banks through which the payments were routed did not raise red flags on the abnormally large cash deposits by importers. Where they were raised, it is unclear if any action was initiated. It is also mind-boggling that the customs authorities could not see that the imported equipment had been invoiced at a highly inflated price.

It is now more than a year and a half since the scandal came to light and an investigation was launched. Yet new details keep emerging, thanks to a painstaking inquiry by a parliamentary panel. The inquiry undertaken by the panel is crucial not just to hold those involved in this fraud accountable but also to identify the gaps in the current AML/ CFT regime and its enforcement to prevent the recurrence of future scams. Not too long ago, Pakistan faced the threat of being declared a pariah by the FATF because of its weak AML/ CFT regime. It was after three years of immense effort and improvement in the framework that the global watchdog let Pakistan off the hook. It is, therefore, crucial that the inquiry by the parliamentary panel be fully supported by the authorities.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 15/02/2025)

Top Nepra officials hike salaries without cabinet nod

Top officials of the National Electric and Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) have significantly increased their remunerations, without mandatory approval by the federal cabinet, sources told *Dawn*.

The increase has come at a time when the power sector is facing massive technical, commercial and distribution losses.

The chairperson and members of all the regulatory bodies are normally entitled to a maximum Management Position (MP) scale I with basic pay of Rs629,000 to Rs772,780 per month.

Other perks — Rs146,000 to 206,000 for house rent and Rs35,000 for utilities — take their total pay to Rs800,000 to Rs1 million.

Remuneration for chairperson, members increased four times in violation of law

The Nepra officials have approved almost a three times hike in their remunerations.

The regulatory body was sent a detailed questionnaire on Feb 10 seeking comment on the salary revisions and whether the government's approval was sought, but no response was received, despite multiple reminders.

The total gross salary of the Nepra chairperson has increased to almost Rs3.25m and of its officials to around Rs2.95m.

The revised remuneration package includes a basic pay of Rs700,000 to Rs773,000. In addition, the Nepra officials have approved Rs631,000 to 700,000 per month 'regulatory allowance' for themselves on the pattern of judicial allowance for judges.

They have also secured an ad hoc relief for 2024 of Rs587,000 to Rs650,000.

On top of that, they have also become eligible for ad hoc relief for 2023 at the rate of Rs544,000 to Rs600,000.

They also draw house rent allowance of Rs176,000 to Rs206,000 per month besides Rs105,150 to Rs116,000 as ad hoc relief for 2022 and Rs70,000 to Rs77,300 as ad hoc relief for 2021.

Their other perks include car monetisation of Rs96,000 and utility allowance of Rs32,000 to Rs35,000.

Their cumulative salary package has now touched Rs2.95m to Rs3.25m, even higher than superior court judges.

Govt approval
The salary, perks and privileges for the Nepra chairperson and members are outlined in Section 8 of the Nepra Act, 1997.

"The Chairman and Members of the Authority shall be eligible for such remuneration and allowances as the Authority may, with the approval of the Federal Government, determine," said the provision.

However, sources told *Dawn* these revisions were made without the government's approval.

Section 8 of Nepra Act also states that the remuneration and allowances of the chairperson and members will account for their "specialised nature of work" and to ensure competitive salaries paid in the private sector.

Most Nepra members and chairpersons are usually retired bureaucrats whose last drawn gross salaries in service range between Rs600,000 to Rs700,000.

Currently, the Nepra chairperson and two members — from KP and Balochistan — are retired bureaucrats.

After the revision, the total gross salaries of four Nepra members and the chairperson have increased to more than four times their final salaries as government officials.

Sources said a Nepra official convinced the incumbent chairperson and members that they had the power to increase their remunerations without the government's approval.

This pay hike has also created a discrepancy among the officials of Nepra and other regulators, who were being remunerated under the MP scale as notified by the Ministry of Finance.

The only exemption to this rule was the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority chairperson who was drawing a salary under the special professional pay scale — all-inclusive maximum remuneration between Rs1.5m and Rs2m.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 17/02/2025)

Govt claims saving Rs1.5tr by revisiting IPP contracts

The government on Monday claimed to have secured about Rs1.571 trillion in savings in future payments to a total of 27 independent power producers (IPPs) through negotiations so far, while another 'unwilling' producer would have to undergo a forensic audit.

This was the key takeaway from a presentation made by a power division team — comprising federal minister Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Muhammad Ali and federal secretary Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan — before the Senate Standing Committee on Power, led by Senator Mohsin Aziz.

"The above savings will be passed on to the consumers through changes in agreements and tariffs over the contracting period," read one of the slides presented to the Senate panel.

It explained that Rs411 billion in savings had been secured through the termination of contracts with five IPPs, Rs238bn through the revision of tariff contracts with eight bagasse-based IPPs, and Rs922bn in tariff revisions with 14 thermal IPPs.

The panel was informed that discussions were now in progress with 45 public sector power plants for more savings. Power Minister Leghari also assured the panel the government would neither discourage solar systems nor impose any tax.

SAPM Muhammad Ali said the government was paying Rs70-80bn to five IPPs whose contracts stood terminated, including Rs30bn to Hub Power Company alone. He dispelled the notion that IPPs were forced to revise contracts through pressure tactics. He said payables to the tune of about Rs300bn on account of late payment surcharge were being waived through the negotiation process, including Rs100bn already written off.

Forensic audit

Responding to a question from Senator Shibli Faraz as to why forensic audits were not performed as billions and trillions were paid to IPPs in the past, Mr Ali said Pakistan did not have the expertise to conduct forensic audit of 50-60 plants and required a lot of money.

He said his committee had sought Rs22 million in 2020 for such an audit, but could not get even a rupee. However, now the audit would be conducted of the IPP not agreeing to discussions for tariff revision, he said, adding that an IPP that did not come to the negotiating table was being examined forensically.

Responding to another question, he agreed that IPPs had secured undue payments from the government by misleading it in fuel and efficiency standards, but it was very difficult to establish over-invoicing allegations without solid evidence and such an attempt could backfire and sponsors could go to international arbitration.

Therefore, he said the task force on IPPs was addressing the matter through negotiations as it had examined the balance sheets of these plants for 20 years.

Power Minister Leghari said the previous government did not implement the Muhammad Ali report on IPPs, adding that the present government had already secured over Rs1.4tr from IPPs without any discretion or favour.

Senator Mohsin Aziz appreciated the performance of the task force on IPPs but wondered when these savings would benefit the consumers. Muhammad Ali said it would gradually reach consumers as negotiations progress and contracts come into force. Mr Leghari chipped in by saying that electricity rates had already dropped by Rs4.11 per unit since June 2024 and more substantial tariff reductions were expected.

The meeting was told that the government had fixed the return of 17pc for power plants against the unprecedented return of 35pc in the last decades. SAPM Muhammad Ali stated that the government recovered Rs35bn from the power plants which had been paid by the federal government in lieu of fuel. Additionally, the government has initiated negotiations on 45 renewable plants to reduce the profit margin on the said plants at sustainable rates.

While discussing the circular debt of the power sector, the SAPM underscored that the government was negotiating to relinquish the interest on circular debt and formulate a structure for the payment of stock circular debt in the coming five to seven years.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 25/02/2025)

Protests over water and power outages cause citywide traffic mess

Protests over water and power shortages broke out across several areas of the metropolis on Tuesday, leading to hours-long traffic jams on key roadways.

Moreover, authorities fear further unrest as city residents, who are already grappling with a severe water crisis for the past three days, would face more hardship because the water utility is still working to repair leaks in its supply lines and the water supply would not be restored until Friday.

On Tuesday, commuters endured immense hardship as protesters blocked both lanes of several roads, setting tyres on fire and forcing traffic authorities to divert traffic on alternative routes where slow movement of vehicles was reported.

According to a traffic police spokesperson, there were several protest demonstrations and sit-ins on main roads across the city.

Although there were no protests on Sharea Faisal, Rashid Minhas Road and University Road, the key road links remained clogged throughout the day and late evening due to the closure of several adjoining arteries.

In the South zone of Karachi police, Arambagh, Eidgah Chowk, Tibet Centre and Fresco Chowk were the most affected areas because of the protests against water and power shortage, said DIG-South Syed Asad Raza.

Traffic police in a statement said that both tracks of Jahangir Road near 'Shah Najaf Cut' remained closed for traffic for over six hours due to the protests. Traffic was diverted on alternative routes. The road was opened for traffic after 10pm.

The citizens also suffered due to traffic chaos on several adjoining roads such as Numaish Chowrangi towards Gurumandir, Bahadur Yar Jang Road and Business Recorder Road. Both tracks of Jamshed Road near PSO pump remained closed for traffic. The residents of Landhi-89 blocked both tracks of the main road while Murtaza Chowrangi also remained closed.

Both tracks of the main road in Garden were also closed for traffic because of the residents' protest against water and power shortage.
Similar protests were also reported from the Korangi Industrial Area.

The DIG-South said they apprehended more protests and sit-ins and aggravation of law and order situation as there were reports that several areas of the metropolis may not get water supply till Friday owing to disruption of water line near Old Subzi Mandi.

He said these civic issues needed to be addressed by authorities concerned as police can engage the protestors in talks, help in diversion and regulating of traffic but they cannot provide water.

He said that realising the gravity of the problem, Sindh chief secretary was taking concerted efforts for overhauling the traffic situation by taking several initiatives like removal of encroachments etc. “It is a long haul but it should be religiously followed,” opined the DIG.
Newly appointed Traffic DIG Pir Mohammed Shah told Dawn that during the last two months, at least 190 protests had taken place in the city mainly over water and power issues among other problems.

The most affected areas were Teen Hatti, Gurumandir, Lyari, Gharibabad, Liaquatabad, Askari Park, Subzi Mandi, Quaidabad, Dawood Chowrangi, Link Road and Sohrab Goth.

He said that almost on a daily basis, two-three protests take place against water and power issues on an average. “This is a genuine and serious issue, which needs to be addressed urgently for smooth flow of traffic and preventing traffic chaos,” opined the traffic police chief.
(By Imtiaz Ali Dawn, 13, 26/02/2025)

Revised solar policy

THE decision to significantly revise down buyback prices at which power distribution companies purchase electricity from rooftop solar system owners is the correct step towards energy price equity for all consumers.

Under the revised net-metering policy, distribution companies will buy unused surplus solar electricity from net-metered consumers at Rs10 per unit, down by nearly 63pc from Rs27, during the day while selling grid power to them for Rs42 during off-peak hours, and Rs48 during peak hours (the prices are ‘net of applicable taxes’) or at the applicable rates being paid by households connected to the national grid. The revised tariffs will apply to new distributed solar or net-metered consumers; existing beneficiaries will shift under this framework after the expiry of their seven-year contracts. Besides, net-metered consumers would no longer be allowed to instal solar capacity exceeding their sanctioned load, except for a 10pc cushion, compared to the current 50pc margin.

The revisions became necessary due to three factors. One, most rooftop solar power owners have installed far more surplus solar power than they need for self-consumption. This helps them export surplus electrons to the grid during the day, and import them after sunset. Surplus electrons exported to distribution firms in winter are often reclaimed in summer. It amounts to using the grid as a big storage battery while avoiding payment of capacity charges and transmission costs on electricity consumption.

Second, affluent urban net-metered households are causing a nine-paisa per unit impact on average electricity cost which, the energy ministry says, could increase to Rs3.6 by 2034 if the policy is not changed. By the end of December 2024, the existing 283,000 rooftop solar owners had already transferred the burden of Rs159bn to those dependent on grid power. Third, there are valid concerns that higher penetration of distributed solar could put the infrastructure at risk of failure since most net-metered surplus loads are concentrated in larger cities where rapid capacity expansion might compromise supply stability.

It is but natural that the changes in the distributed solar policy, leading to the reduction in buyback rates, and the shift to net billing from net metering, have come under criticism. But the opprobrium generated by the policy revisions are misplaced because these will increase the payback periods for consumers who have installed or planned to instal oversized solar systems. The falling solar panel and equipment prices will keep the payback period short despite tighter net-metering conditions, at least for those who have just enough capacity for self-consumption despite the changes in the tariff structure for distributed solar. Some may argue that the alterations in incentives will discourage rooftop solarisation, but that is unlikely because solar power is still cheaper than the grid and becoming more cost-effective as technology improves.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 15/03/2025)

Govt asks Nepra to cut tariffs by Rs1.71 per unit till June end

The government has formally asked the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) to reduce for three months (April-June 2025) the electricity rates by Rs1.71 per unit for all consumers across the country.

The government has decided to increase the tariff differential subsidy (TDS) for electricity consumers from April to June FY2025. The per-unit additional TDS for all consumers of ex-Wapda distribution companies (Discos) and K-Electric (except lifeline domestic), is estimated at Rs1.71/kwh, said a brief power division request to the regulator.

It said the federal cabinet had taken a decision on March 26, 2025 as part of government’s efforts to reduce consumer-end tariff and improve demand. The regulator has a called a public hearing on April 4 to complete the formality for applicability of Rs1.71 per unit lower tariff with effect from April 1 to June 30, 2025. The government would notify the new rates soon after the regulator completes public hearing.

The power division said Nepra had determined the national average rate for FY2024-25 at Rs35.50 per unit. The government had notified the national average tariff of Rs32.99 per unit from October 2024 onwards with a Rs2.51 per unit TDS out of taxpayer money. After fresh notification, the base national tariff would come down to Rs31.20 per unit for three months, excluding almost a dozen taxes, duties and surcharges.

New rates to be notified only after April 4 public hearing by the power regulator

It was widely reported in the media through official leaks that the prime minister would announce a Rs8 per unit reduction in electricity rates in his speech to the nation on March 23. The prime minister, however, did not announce any such relief package in his Pakistan Day speech, pending announcement of staff-level agreement (SLA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the time.

The IMF later announced the SLA earlier this week. The federal cabinet then cleared the transfer of Rs10 per litre additional petroleum levy on petrol and diesel imposed on March 15 for Rs1.71 per unit reduction for consumers as promised by the prime minister.

The Rs10 per litre levy translates to about Rs15bn or about Rs170-180bn annual revenue, depending on actual sales. However, this will have to pass through the regulatory process, although IMF has not yet formally cleared this as well.

The prime minister office (PMO) had itself announced on March 15 that the PM had decided to maintain the petroleum prices at the existing level against up to Rs13 per litre worked out by the oil regulator and petroleum division with a promise to transfer its financial impact to the electricity consumers.

The petroleum levy on petrol and diesel was thus increased by Rs10 to a maximum of Rs70 permissible under the Finance Act, 2025, to divert the revenues towards maximising relief in power tariffs.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 29/03/2025)

Major relief in power bills for homes, industry

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday announced a reduction of about 12 to 17 per cent in electricity rates for various consumer categories through a combination of quarterly adjustments, savings secured from independent and state-owned power producers and diversion of petroleum and grid levies on oil and gas products.

Speaking at an event especially organised to announce the tariff cut, the prime minister said an “Eid gift” of Rs7.41 per unit reduction in the national average tariff and Rs7.69 per unit cut in industrial rates was the first humble relief to the consumers braving agonising energy costs.

He said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had refused to allow diversion of financial impact of lower international oil prices last month towards reducing electricity rates and he himself desired to take up the matter with the IMF managing director as it did not involve any subsidy but simply not passing on reduction in international oil prices.

“It was not easy to convince the IMF. The impasse finally ended and they allowed us to reduce power rate like a favour,” he said, adding that the matter required to be handled with self-restraint, as the IMF programme was a trust of the nation that had been breached in the past and needed to be rebuilt.

The per-unit tariff reduction announced by the prime minister includes a cut of about Rs1.90 on account of lower quarterly tariff adjustments (QTA) for the second quarter (October-December) of FY25, Rs1.71 against Rs10 per litre increase in petroleum levy on petrol and diesel, over Re1 from a Rs791 per unit grid levy on industrial captive power plants, and about Rs3 on account of terminations and revisions in contracts of independent power producers (IPPs) and government power plants.

While the power regulator Nepra on Thursday notified a Rs1.90 per unit negative QTA in April-June bills, it has completed hearing for some of the IPPs and would review Rs1.71 per unit cut against the petroleum levy increase on Friday. The government is now pushing for the applicability of all these cuts within weeks.

Mr Sharif said the power sector task force — seated in the front row — secured about Rs3.699 trillion in savings over an average 15-year lifespan of the IPPs. Now is the time for the dividends of this saving to reach the nation, including industry and trade, residential and commercial consumers.

Power sector savings
The prime minister appreciated the task force members, including Power Minister Awais Leghari, Lt Gen Zafar Iqbal, Power Secretary Fakhre Alam, and PM’s adviser Muhammad Ali, and expressed gratitude for the role played by Army Chief Gen Asim Munir in not only securing savings from IPPs but also achieving macroeconomic stability.

This would be followed by further tariff cuts through even more challenging task of overcoming Rs600 billion worth of annual electricity theft, open electricity market operations and privatisation or provincialisation of distribution companies, he said.

The prime minister announced a Rs7.69 per unit (13pc) reduction in the average electricity rate for industry to Rs40.51 per unit from Rs48.19 per unit at present, saying this used to be Rs58.50 per unit in June last year.

He said the power tariff for domestic consumers was being reduced by Rs7.41 per unit to Rs37.64 from Rs45.05 per unit at present. This rate was Rs48.70 per unit in June 2024, he said. This, however, appeared to be an inadvertent mix-up.

A tariff sheet from the power division seen by Dawn suggests that actually, it is the national average electricity tariff, which currently stands at Rs45.05 per unit and would be slashed by Rs7.41 per unit (15pc) to Rs37.64.

The unit rate for protected consumers in the first 100- to 200-unit category would be slashed by Rs6.14 per unit each to Rs8.52 per unit and Rs11.51 per unit, respectively. This will benefit about 17 million consumers.

A reduction of Rs7.24 per unit would be provided to non-protected consumers on 300 units per month to Rs34.03 per unit, down by 17pc. A similar Rs7.24 per unit (13pc) reduction would be applied to time-of-use consumers in the 300 units category to bring down their rate to Rs48.46 from Rs55.70. This will also benefit about 15.3m consumers.

The average rate for residential consumers (including protected and non-protected) would go down by Rs6.71 per unit to Rs31.63 per unit from Rs38.34 at present. The number of total residential consumers stands at about 35m.

The lower rates would not apply to about two million consumers in the lifeline residential category currently charged at Rs4.78 per unit for up to 50 units and Rs9.37 per unit for 51-100 units.

The commercial consumers would be given a Rs8.58 per unit (12pc) relief to Rs62.47 per unit while a cut of Rs7.18 per unit would be allowed to general services, bulk and agriculture consumers that would scale down their rates to Rs49.48 per unit, Rs47.87 per unit and Rs34.58 per unit, respectively.

Circular debt, SOE losses
The prime minister said that the power sector's circular debt, currently standing at Rs2.393tr, would be gradually eradicated over the next five years forever, for which arrangements had been made.

He said the power sector task force had now been assigned to secure more savings through a reduction in theft and other inefficiencies so that another major relief could be extended to the consumers next month and gear up the journey to progress through competitive industrial production and exports and other economic activities.

PM Shehbaz recalled the tough economic conditions when the previous government violated the IMF agreement, and the lender was not even ready to talk while the country was on the verge of default. He said he had to intervene many times to facilitate letters of credit for the import of oil and other essential products.

He said the year-long journey established the fact that turnaround could be achieved with "honesty and unwavering will", although the people of Pakistan, including households, businessmen and traders, had to pay a heavy price.

He said the economic stability had been secured, although the journey ahead was equally challenging and required surgical operations at many levels, including stopping over Rs800bn annual bleeding in the state-owned entities (SOEs) like a "bottomless pit".

For this, privatisation and rightsizing would require quick decisions and implementations to lead the country towards organic growth as subsidies could not be provided under the IMF programme.

Nepra notification
Meanwhile, Nepra on Thursday notified a Rs1.90 per unit negative QTA for October-December 2024 with a fiscal impact of about Rs56bn.

It also notified a Rs3.022 per unit negative fuel cost adjustment for consumers of K-Electric for January and about 46 paise per unit negative FCA for other power distribution companies (Discos) for February with effect from April 1, 2025.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 04/04/2025)

Power relief

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of a Rs7.41 per unit cut in electricity rates comes as a much-needed relief for households and businesses struggling with exorbitant power bills. Unlike previous targeted subsidies, this reduction is across the board, covering not just domestic consumers but also commercial and industrial ones. This is a significant move, especially for industries that have long argued that high electricity costs make Pakistani exports uncompetitive in global markets.

However, even with this reduction, electricity prices remain steep, and Pakistan's industries will continue to struggle against regional competitors like India and Bangladesh, where power tariffs are significantly lower. For businesses reliant on energy-intensive production, the high cost of electricity remains a major hurdle to boosting exports. Another concern is the economic sustainability of this tariff cut. Pakistan's ongoing 37-month bailout programme with IMF has already placed strict conditions on fiscal discipline.

The recent agreement securing an additional $1.3 billion from IMF indicates that economic management is being closely scrutinised. The Fund had allowed only a Re1 per unit reduction in power tariffs - far lower than what the government has now announced. If this decision is not in line with the agreed financial framework, it could put future negotiations and disbursements at risk.

The country's power sector is already plagued by inefficiencies and reliance on expensive energy imports. Any tariff reduction without a corresponding revenue strategy could deepen fiscal imbalances, forcing the government to either increase subsidies or accumulate further debt.

If this reduction is indeed viable within the economic framework agreed upon with IMF, the government must transparently outline how it intends to offset the financial impact. Without clarity on whether revenue from captive power plants or other adjustments will cover this relief, citizens may find themselves facing even higher tariffs in the future.
(By Editorial, The Express Tribune, 14, 04/04/2025)

Nepra okays Rs1.71 per unit subsidy for three months

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Thursday approved Rs1.71 per unit subsidy on average tariff for consumers of all distribution companies, including K-Electric, for three months (April to June).

The Rs58.6 billion subsidy would be funded through Rs10 per litre petroleum levy on petrol and diesel imposed by the federal government on March 15.

"The request of the Ministry (of Energy) to provide additional subsidy of Rs.1.71/kwh to all consumers of XWDISCOs and K-Electric (except lifeline consumers) for the period from April 2025 to June 2025 is hereby approved," read an order issued by the regulator.

It said the ministry had not requested for any change in the Nepra's determined tariff or revenue requirement of Discos, rather had decided to use the petroleum development levy (PDL) to provide additional subsidy to all consumers across the country, except lifeline consumers.

Base national tariff to come down to Rs31.20/unit excluding taxes, duties and surcharges

It said the federal cabinet had taken a decision on March 26, as part of the government's "efforts to reduce consumer-end tariff and improve demand".

Nepra had determined the average rate for FY25 at Rs35.50 per unit. The government had notified the national average tariff of Rs32.99 per unit from October 2024 onwards with a Rs2.51 per unit tariff differential subsidy out of the taxpayer's money. After fresh notification, the base national tariff would come down to Rs31.20 per unit for three months, excluding almost a dozen taxes, duties and surcharges.

It was not yet clear if the Rs1.71 per unit subsidy would continue after June 30, as the government did not make any commitment to the regulator. "The MoE explained that expected PDL collection for the FY2025-26, would be considered at the time of annual rebasing of tariff for the FY2025-26, after approval of the cabinet," the regulator said.

The MoE reported that the government had allocated around Rs266bn subsidy for the FY2024-25, which after inclusion of the currently proposed relief of Rs58.6bn at the rate of Rsl.7l per unit, would become Rs325bn. However, the category-wise relief would be different depending upon applicable taxes for the relevant category.

The petroleum levy on petrol and diesel was increased by Rs10 to a maximum of Rs70 permissible under the Finance Act 2025 to divert the revenues towards maximising relief in power tariffs.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 11/04/2025)

Anger boils amid power outages in scorching heat

Prolonged power outages amid scalding heat sparked vociferous protests in several neighbourhoods of the metropolis, particularly in Liaquatabad and Azizabad, where angry residents took to the streets late on Tuesday night. The roadblocks continued in early hours of Wednesday.

They blocked major thoroughfares by burning tyres and chanting slogans against the government and K-Electric, the city's power utility.

The protests triggered traffic logjams on the major roads from Liaquatabad to Jahangir Road and from Jahangir Road to Ayesha Manzil, stretching from Shahrah-e-Pakistan and Jahangir Road to Guru Mandir.

According to protesters, the electricity supply had been suspended since 7pm on Tuesday. As temperatures soared, the absence of power compounded the suffering of residents, particularly affecting children, the elderly, and women. Many residents claimed they had repeatedly called K-Electric's emergency helpline but received no response.

The protesters further said that the ongoing load-shedding had also caused a severe water shortage in the area. They lamented that sewers were overflowing, roads had been neglected for years, and that the basic utilities, including gas, were only available for limited hours - often requiring pressure pumps to function. They also expressed anger over receiving inflated electricity bills ranging from Rs6,000 to Rs10,000 for single-room homes despite the long hours of load shedding.

The atmosphere grew tense as residents warned that if their grievances remained unresolved, future protests could escalate. "Today we are burning tyres in protest; tomorrow, we may set ourselves on fire," one protester remarked.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for K-Electric stated that the disruption was caused by a fault in the underground cable in the Liaquatabad C-1 area. "Our technical teams are working to repair the fault. We apologise for the inconvenience and appeal to citizens for their cooperation," the spokesperson said. Power was eventually restored around 2.30am, bringing an end to the protests. Police then reopened the roads and restored traffic flow.

A similar protest erupted at Hussainabad Food Street in Azizabad, where residents blocked roads by burning tyres, causing traffic congestion. Protesters there also spoke about the double whammy: power outage and water shortage, criticising the government's lack of action. "It is inhumane to treat Karachi - a city called the engine of national economy - in this way," one resident said.

The protest at Hussainabad was called off after the SHO of local police station assured the demonstrators that he would take up their grievances with higher authorities to expedite the restoration of electricity.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 24/04/2025)

P&T Colony residents stage protest against power outages

Residents of P&T Colony staged a protest against prolonged power outages in their locality at the local office of the K-Electric in Defence on Monday.

They chanted slogans against the power utility and besieged the customer care office, known as IBC.

In a statement, the KE condemned "the mob attack" on its Defence IBC and said that "miscreants from the P&T Colony surrounded the IBC, hurled bricks to shatter its windows, and forced staff including women to seek refuge inside the office premises".

It said that "pending dues from defaulters have already exceeded Rs520 million".
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, Dawn, 13, 20/05/2025)

Humidity, power outages trigger surge in skin diseases

The combination of intense heat, high humidity, poor hygiene, frequent power outages and non-availability of water has led to a significant spike in skin diseases across the city. Additional Director at the Sindh Institute of Skin Diseases Dr Abdullah Yahya revealed that daily patient visits have surged by 20 per cent during the summer months, reaching a staggering 6,000. This surge is a stark reminder of the impact that seasonal weather conditions, along with certain lifestyle factors, have on the skin health of residents. He shared these insights in an interview with The Express Tribune.

Dr Abdullah explained that common skin issues reported include fungal, bacterial, and parasitic infections, as well as scabies, eczema, heat rashes, and general itching. The highest number of cases are being reported in areas such as Korangi, Nazimabad, North Nazimabad, and Jacob Lines.

He also warned against the overuse of antibiotics and steroids when treating skin diseases, as they can be harmful. For instance, if a patient has scabies with an accompanying infection, the infection should be treated first, rather than directly addressing the scabies. Steroids should only be prescribed when absolutely necessary, especially for patients with diabetes or high blood pressure, and must be used with caution. Overuse of antibiotics can lead to drug resistance, while steroids can have negative effects on sleep, appetite, and mood.

Dr Abdullah advised the public to limit exposure to the sun during peak hours, especially from 10am to 2pm. He recommended men wear caps, and women wear light-coloured scarves when outdoors. Additionally, he stressed the importance of applying sunscreen / sunblock at least 30 minutes before going outside and reapplying it every two-and-a-half hours.

To prevent fungal infections, Dr Abdullah suggested using separate brushes, combs, towels, nail clippers, cotton socks, and leather shoes. He also emphasised the importance of bathing twice a day and thoroughly drying the body with a towel.

On the topic of diet, Dr Abdullah recommended avoiding beef, egg yolks, and spicy foods, which may delay recovery, while suggesting that yogurt, milk, and drinks like lassi could promote faster healing.

To help protect skin and promote recovery from existing conditions, it's important to keep skin moisturised to prevent dryness, which can make it more vulnerable to infections.

By following these precautions, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of developing skin diseases during the hot and humid summer months.
(By Dua Abbas The Express Tribune, 04, 28/05/2025)

JI slams Nepra for 'favouring KE against Karachiites' amid power crisis

Amid rising temperatures and long power outages in the city, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) on Thursday wrote a strong letter to the head of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), accusing the body of maintaining "double standards" and having an "anti-Karachi bias" in its recent decisions on K-Electric's tariffs and recovery policies.

In his letter, the JI Karachi chief Monem Zafar slammed the Nepra's approval allowing KE to transfer recovery losses, ie, losses due to unpaid bills by defaulters, onto law-abiding consumers.

He called the decision not only unjust, but also discriminatory, stating that no such precedent exists for distribution companies in other cities of the country.

He emphasised that Karachi's consumers, who regularly pay their electricity bills, are being punished for KE's inefficiency, mismanagement and failure to ensure effective recovery from defaulters.

Recovering defaulters' losses from law-abiding consumers is unjust and unprecedented, says Monem Zafar

"Why is K-Electric being favoured? Is Nepra's claim of a uniform national tariff merely a hollow slogan?" the JI leader questioned in the letter.

According to the letter, the Nepra's decision to set Karachi's base electricity tariff at Rs40 per unit, compared to the national average of Rs35, is a blatant example of unfair treatment. He warned that this move would burden Karachi's residents with billions of rupees in additional yearly costs, who are already enduring the country's highest electricity prices and chronic load-shedding.

The letter also highlighted Nepra's approval of KE's multi-year tariff framework, which would allow the utility to collect Rs97bn from Karachi's citizens in the fiscal year 2024-25 alone. This financial burden, Mr Zafar claimed, is just the beginning, with more to follow until 2030. He further raised alarm over an additional Rs76bn that Nepra is reportedly preparing to approve in favour of KE under the guise of " the right of claim," again to be recovered from paying consumers.

"These developments come at a time when Karachi is facing one of the worst electricity crises in years. Frequent power outages, especially during the sweltering heat and looming heatwaves, are pushing residents to the brink while both Nepra and the federal government maintain a criminal silence," said the JI leader.

He demanded that Nepra immediately reverse its decision to shift recovery losses onto consumers, implement a uniform base tariff across the country and take disciplinary action against KE for its ongoing failure to provide uninterrupted power supply. Mr Zafar also called for the cancellation of KE's license and recommended that the federal government supply cheaper electricity to Karachi through the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC). In a major policy departure, the Nepra had a couple of days ago approved KE's request to incorporate unrecovered bills into its consumer tariff — starting with a recovery shortfall of 6.75 per cent in 2023-24, gradually declining to 3.5pc by 2029-30. The Nepra set KE's base tariff at Rs40 per unit for the fiscal year 2023-24, which is almost 40pc higher than even the national average tariff of about Rs28 per unit in 2025-26 for the 10 public sector power distribution companies (Discos).

MQM-P demands legal action against KE

Though the government expressed "serious concerns" over a series of recent determinations by Nepra favouring KE and announced its decision to challenge them for being against the interests of the government, consumers and taxpayers, its own ally doesn't sound convinced with the its "hollow announcement."

Echoing similar sentiments, members of the Sindh Assembly from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) expressed outrage over the deteriorating power situation in Karachi. In a statement release from the party's Bahadurabad headquarters, MQM-P legislators accused the KE of holding the city hostage and systematically violating citizens' basic rights.

They pointed out that despite having all necessary resources and receiving massive payments from consumers, KE has failed to ensure even the minimum supply of electricity. "Power outages exceeding sixteen hours a day in the country's economic hub are simply inexplicable," the statement read. The lawmakers accused the KE of deliberately failing to meet its contractual obligations.

Even after more than two decades, K-Electric has not added a single megawatt to the national grid under the terms of its agreement, they said, adding that the city's crumbling power infrastructure is a testament to the utility's persistent failure.

The MQM-P called upon Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to intervene personally, urging him to rescue the people of Karachi from what they termed a "power mafia".

They demanded legal action against KE for breaching contractual terms and for inflicting collective punishment on the city's population.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 30/05/2025)

Why just K-Electric?

NEPRA has taken serious note of relentless and excessive power blackouts exceeding 12 hours a day in Karachi during peak summer. In a letter sent to K-Electric, the country's only privatised distribution company, the power regulator wants its management to put an end to consumers' hardship. In addition to causing suffering, it has noted that blackouts of long duration are disrupting economic activity in the nation's financial and commercial hub. It has sought an explanation from the utility over what it describes as its deteriorating performance across several key parameters, including but not limited to transmission and distribution losses and lower recoveries. The downward trend in KE's performance undermines the intended goals of its privatisation — ie, "improvements in operational efficiency and ... a reliable, uninterrupted electricity supply to consumers within its service territory". It says the current situation "raises serious questions about KE's ability and commitment to fulfil its obligations". Nepra has attributed the ongoing problems being faced by Karachi residents to the KE's mismanagement and operational inadequacies.

That the regulator has finally noticed the impact of enforced blackouts on private consumers and businesses is a positive development. In fact, it has finally conceded that feeder shutdowns to control T&D losses or force recoveries is neither legally justifiable nor ethically acceptable, and "unfairly punish compliant consumers and undermine public trust in the utility's management". Nevertheless, it is perplexing to see Nepra training its guns only at KE, which is, after all, not the only power utility enforcing 'illegal' blackouts in low-recovery, high-theft areas within its jurisdiction. It is stated government policy that is being implemented nationwide, including by public sector utilities for many years now — a practice also being followed by gas companies to minimise their losses. The government-controlled Discos, too, are facing issues related to rising T&D losses and theft due to increased electricity prices. Indeed, in the eyes of many, KE's performance may have left a lot to be desired since its privatisation. However, the fact that it has reduced T&D losses from 38pc to 20pc through an investment of $4bn in network upgradation while restricting enforced load-shedding to only 30pc of the areas in its jurisdiction is a major accomplishment. Singling it out for enforced blackouts, lower recoveries or T&D losses will only strengthen resistance to the privatisation of other power companies the government is struggling to sell.
(By Editorial, Dawn, 06, 31/05/2025)

KE presents formula for loadshedding-free city

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of K-Electric, Moonis Ali has presented a practical formula to eliminate load shedding in Karachi.

Speaking at a session with the Council of Economic and Energy Journalists (CEEJ) on Saturday, Ali revealed that 300 of the 2,129 electricity feeders in Karachi are responsible for 87% of total power losses, making them the primary cause of persistent load shedding in the city.

To address this issue, the CEO offered a proposal to the government, suggesting, if it takes over these 300 feeders and manage the internal power supply in these areas, KE would provide load shedding-free supply to Karachi. He added that KE would supply power to these feeders, and the government would be responsible for recovering the bills.

According to Ali, 70% of Karachi is already exempted from load shedding. KE is also working on deploying advanced technology to curb electricity theft. For instance, if the PMT (Pole Mounted Transformer or Photomultiplier Tube) is tampered with, it would trigger a technical fault that would take up to three days to repair, discouraging illegal interference.

Ali urged the government to support KE in managing internal systems in the problematic areas.

Discussing future plans, Ali clarified that the multi-year tariff would not put extra burden on regular consumers. Instead, the tariff framework is designed to attract foreign investment into Karachi's power infrastructure. He noted that National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) would review the investment yearly; in the future, electricity could become cheaper for Karachi consumers.

He added that with the implementation of the multi-year tariff, Karachi would be 90% load-shedding-free by 2030. By then, the number of consumers in the city would reach five million, and power transmission would reach 5,000 megawatts.

In response to a question, Ali stated, KE is fully prepared to supply power to captive power industries by integrating them into the national grid and is willing to work with the government and stakeholders on a set timeline for grid transmission.

He concluded by noting a significant rise in electricity demand in recent months due to increased industrial activity in Karachi. Currently, KE has the capacity to supply 4,500 megawatts of electricity to the city.

Protest
Citizens in Quaidabad area protested against extended power outages on National Highway. The protest, which began at around 8pm on Friday, until Saturday evening causing worst traffic jams.

Taking advantage of the situation, fearless armed men also did their job of robbing people. In one incident, armed men snatched a motorcycle from a young biker and fled the scene.

MQM-P
The members of the Sindh Assembly belonging to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) have expressed deep concern and outrage over prolonged load shedding during the extreme heat.

They said, instead of improving service, the K-Electric, as usual, has increased the duration of load shedding. Korangi, Landhi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, Mehmoodabad, Burns Road, Garden, Nazimabad, Orangi Town, Baldia Town, North Karachi, New Karachi, Surjani, and Old City Area are the most affected. In Shah Faisal Colony, consumers connected to Abbas Bawazir PMT are the worst hit as the last load shedding of the day begins at 12 midnight and ends at 2.30am. Sometimes it is beyond 2.30am.

The MQM-P MPAs stated that the city that feeds the entire country is deprived of its basic rights.
(By Ehtisham Mufti The Express Tribune, 04, 01/06/2025)

PA unites against unannounced load-shedding

Members of the Sindh Assembly have unanimously condemned the unannounced load shedding by electricity distribution companies K-Electric, HESCO, and SEPCO. Leaders from PPP, MQM, PTI, and Jamaat-e-Islami stood united in their demand for an immediate end to surprise power outages.

Despite strong calls from the special committee on energy to reduce load shedding, K-Electric CEO Moonis Alvi continued to defend the unannounced power cuts. The committee expressed strong displeasure over the electricity companies' poor performance and ordered a strict ten-day deadline for compliance.

Committee members questioned how the load shedding schedule was changed without their approval, especially after the prior assurance that there would be no load shedding at night. Officials from K-Electric, HESCO, and SEPCO failed to provide satisfactory answers.

In a meeting held on Monday at the Sindh Assembly building and chaired by PPP's Fayyaz Butt, the special committee directed all electricity companies to immediately stop night load shedding and strictly adhere to an approved schedule. Sindh Assembly Speaker Owais Qadir Shah also attended the session.

Other participants included PPP leaders Ghulam Qadir Chandio, Asif Musa, Sadia Javed; MQM leader Ali Khursheedi; Jamaat-e-Islami's Muhammad Farooq; and senior officials from K-Electric, HESCO, and SEPCO. K-Electric CEO Moonis Alvi apologised for missing the previous meeting.

The committee's frustration was evident as members criticised the prolonged and unpredictable power outages across Sindh, especially in Karachi. The meeting was tense before the arrival of the K-Electric CEO, with some members threatening to issue a show-cause notice for his absence.

Moonis Alvi was grilled about the legal basis for load shedding. He claimed it was necessary due to line losses, but committee members demanded to know under which law such measures are authorised. The officials failed to provide a clear legal justification.

MPA from Liaquatabad Moaz Mehboob warned that FIRs should be registered against K-Electric officials for illegal load shedding. When Alvi countered by mentioning electricity theft, Mehboob expressed his support for cracking down on theft as well.

Sindh Assembly Speaker Owais Qadir Shah emphasised that all electricity companies must provide a clear load shedding schedule. Jamaat-e-Islami's Muhammad Farooq highlighted that the previous agreement banned night load shedding, questioning how the schedule was changed without committee approval. Alvi defended the need for cuts during heatwaves, but Farooq dismissed the claim, noting Karachi's temperatures had not reached 45 degrees.

The meeting also saw members expressing frustration over CEO Alvi's dismissive attitude. Bilqis Mukhtar criticised him for not taking concerns seriously, while Sajjad Soomro and Sadia Javed asked him to stop using his mobile phone repeatedly during the meeting. Sadia also demanded an apology from K-Electric officials for disrespectful remarks made towards an MPA in an earlier session, a demand Alvi acknowledged with an apology on behalf of his institution.

Alvi admitted K-Electric's failure to effectively combat electricity theft and said stronger action was needed in affected areas, though cutting connections remained a challenge.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 03/06/2025)

Sindh Assembly panel asks KE, other utilities to stop loadshedding at night

The Sindh Assembly's Special Committee on Energy on Monday directed all power distribution companies (Discos) in the province — with particular emphasis on K-Electric — to present a formal loadshedding schedule within the next 10 days, ensure uninterrupted night-time power supply and take effective steps to curb electricity theft.

The committee warned that failure to comply would result in legal action against the concerned companies.

The committee met at the Sindh Assembly building under the chairmanship of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Fayyaz Butt, with Sindh Assembly Speaker Awais Qadir Shah also making a special appearance.

The members from parliamentary parties, including the PPP, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), participated in the session, which turned tense during the questioning of KE's Chief Executive Officer Moonis Alvi.

Special Energy Committee of Sindh Assembly gives 10 days to Hesco, Sepco and K-Electric to submit schedule of planned outages
The lawmakers expressed anger over violations of previous agreements, which stated that there would be no loadshedding during the night.

The committee members confronted Mr Alvi, questioning why the loadshedding schedule had been altered without prior consultation.
"When it was agreed that there would be no power cuts at night, who gave you the authority to change the schedule without this committee's approval?" asked Leader of the Opposition Ali Khurshidi of the MQM-P.

The KE chief, along with officials from the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco) and Sukkur Electric Power Company (Sepco), attempted to justify the outages by citing line losses.

However, committee members were not convinced. The legislators demanded to know the legal grounds that "allow" power utilities to conduct loadshedding and requested relevant documentation.

The MQM-P MPA from Liaquatabad, Muaz Mehmood, also confronted the KE CEO, seeking justification for power cuts outside the announced schedule. He proposed strong action against the utility for carrying out unscheduled loadshedding.

"For illegal loadshedding, KE officials should face FIRs," he said, prompting an immediate response from Mr Alvi, who said: "Will you also register FIRs against those involved in power theft?"

Mr Mehmood assured the power utility that the committee supported its efforts to curb electricity theft, but urged it to stop "punishing" the residents of Karachi through unscheduled outages.

Speaker Shah emphasised that all Discos must submit a proper loadshedding schedule and strictly adhere to it.

JI's Muhammad Farooq, visibly agitated, challenged the justification for ongoing nighttime outages, citing previous agreements aimed at preventing such disruptions.

"When has Karachi ever experienced 45°C temperatures, which you're now using as an excuse for increased loadshedding?" he questioned.

His pointed query drew a sharp, sarcastic response from the KE CEO, who quipped, "It seems Jamaat-i-Islami has a special kind of love for us."

Several lawmakers criticised Mr Alvi's conduct during the session. Bilqees Mukhtar of the MQM-P noted that the KE chief appeared disinterested and failed to properly document the committee's concerns.

Another member, Sajjad Soomro, objected to Mr Alvi's constant use of his mobile phone during the proceedings, while Sadia Javed of the PPP demanded an apology from KE officials for using "inappropriate language" towards MPAs in a previous meeting.

Summing up the meeting, the opposition leader announced that the committee had issued a 10-day deadline for all power distribution companies to submit a revised loadshedding schedule, ensure transparency and eliminate night-time outages.

"If these directions are not followed, the government will take strict legal action against all defaulting power companies," he warned.
(By Imran Ayub Dawn, 13, 03/06/2025)

Two die from electrocution as rain continues in Karachi

Two young men died from electrocution in SITE and Surjani Town as light rain continued intermittently across the metropolis on Friday.

While the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) is yet to complete the de-silting of major storm water drains in the city, roads in many areas submerged by rainwater, causing vehicular traffic to move at a snail's pace.

The condition of roads and streets under the town municipal corporations' administrative control was also unimpressive.

In its weather advisory issued on Friday, the Met Office said that due to strong monsoon currents penetrating over the province, Karachi continues to receive intermittent rain on Saturday (today).

According to the Met Office, Surjani Town received the highest count of rain, 16 millimetres, on Friday followed by Bahria Town 10.2mm, North Karachi 6.8mm, Orangi Town. 6.1mm, Gulshan-i-Maymar 5.4mm and Saddar 5mm. Other parts of the city received below 5mm or just traces.

A factory worker was electrocuted inside the industrial unit in the SITE area.

Area SHO Sajjad Khan Afridi told Dawn that Kamran Asghar, 20, died when he suffered an electric shock at around 1:30am.

In another incident, a 21-year-old man was electrocuted in Surjani Town.

Area SHO Mohammed Ali Shah said that Ahmed Haider Ali suffered an electric shock when he touched the gate of his house during rain.

Meanwhile, an unidentified young man died when a wall of a house collapsed near Bakra Piri. The body was shifted to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi.

The Met Office said that rain / thunderstorm with moderate to isolated heavy falls is likely in Karachi, Hyderabad, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Dadu, Sukkur, Larkana, Qamber Shahdadkot, Shikarpur, Khairpur, Naushahro Feroze, Shaheed Benazirabad, Matiari, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Jacobabad, Ghotki, Kashmore and Tharparker districts till Sunday.

Prolonged power outages
Residents of the metropolis spent a sleepless night as power supply in many parts of the metropolis disrupted with the first drop of rain and took up to 10 hours to restore.

However, the K-Electric claimed in a press release that despite sporadic rain across the city, "uninterrupted power supply continued through over 1,600 out of 2,100 feeders".

It said that the KE briefly isolated supply on feeders serving low-lying areas and field teams were mobilised to restore electricity.
(By Dawn Reporter, 13, 28/06/2025)

Most areas without electricity

The heavy rainfall has caused widespread disruptions of electricity, resulting in extended electricity shutdowns across various areas of the metropolis. Most of K-Electric feeders tripped, affecting neighborhoods such as Korangi, Landhi, Shah Faisal Colony, Gulistan-e-Johar, Scheme 33, Gulshan-e-Maymar, Korangi, Gulberg, Bin Qasim, Liaquatabad and Orangi Town. Other areas impacted include DHA Phase VI, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Baldia Town, Mehmoodabad, Manzoor Colony, and Surjani Town.

Due to suspension of electricity, water pumping stations also stopped working, leading to shortage of water in many areas.

Meanwhile, the K-Electric has claimed that despite sustained medium to heavy rainfall across the city and its outskirts, the power supply system has remained largely stable. Over 1,800 of K-Electric's 2,100+ feeders have continued to operate without interruption on the second day of the rainfall.

At the peak of the downpour, around 300 feeders from KE's extensive network were temporarily affected. The majority of these were swiftly restored after receiving safety clearance from field teams, who have been working around the clock.

According to the K-Electric spokesperson, "As a safety precaution, KE temporarily suspended power in select low-lying areas and on circuits with a high prevalence of theft through illegal hook (kunda) connections in order to prevent any untoward incidents."

Dhabeji pumping station
The power supply is disrupted at the Dhabiji pumping station due to a fault in the underground cable.

The KE spokesmen said, "Fault rectification work is being interrupted due to waterlogging in the area. Once the water recedes, the work will be completed, and the supply will be restored."

The company's management is also closely coordinating with civic agencies and the city administration to ensure a timely and effective response.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 04, 29/06/2025)

Govt asks for Rs1.15/unit cut in electricity rate

The government wants to reduce the electricity price for consumers across the country starting July 1, it emerged on Sunday.

The federal government has filed a petition with the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), requesting a Rs1.15 per unit reduction in the tariff.

The change would be applicable to all but lineline domestic consumers.

The power division has advised against any change in electricity rates for the first two lifeline slabs of domestic consumers, as they were already over-subsidised.

Nepra has called a public hearing on July 1 to complete the formality before notification and application of the revised tariff.

According to the petition, the per unit rate for lifeline consumers with up to 50 units per month would remain unchanged at Rs3.95, followed by Rs7.74 for those in the 50 to 100 units range.

For all other consumers and categories, the government has sought a flat Rs1.15 per unit reduction for FY2025-26, but the relief ranges between 3 to 10 per cent depending on their respective rates at present.

For example, protected consumers in the 1 to 100 units range would now be charged at Rs10.54 per unit, instead of Rs11.69 at present, a reduction of 9.8pc.

The subsequent slab — from 101 to 200 units — in the protected category would be charged at Rs13.01 per unit instead of Rs14.16 per unit, down 8pc.

The non-protected consumers — those consuming more than 200 units — will be charged Rs23.44 instead of Rs23.59 per unit for the first 100 units, down by almost 5pc.

The reduction in rates for all other categories, including commercial, industrial, agriculture and bulk consumers would vary from 3 to 4pc but flat Rs1.15 per unit.

The average rate would come at around Rs31.60 per unit, down from about Rs32.75 per unit at present.

These rates have been worked out on the basis of Nepra's tariff determinations for all distribution companies to meet their revenue requirements, aggregate power purchase prices in FY2025-26 and reduced subsidy allocations in the federal budget under an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The Nepra had determined Rs34 per unit national average tariff for FY2025-26 against Rs35.50 per unit this year.

The proposed tariff has been worked out after incorporating about 12.9pc lower subsidy allocation in the budget at Rs1.04 trillion for FY 2025-26 against Rs1.19tr in FY2024-25.

This includes an inter-Disco tariff differential subsidy (TDS) of Rs249.14bn in FY2025-26 against Rs276bn in the outgoing year, down 10pc.

Subsidy for tariff differential to tubewells in Balochistan will be Rs4bn in 2025-26, down from Rs 9.5bn in 2024-25.

The amount of subsidies for merged districts of KP and former Fata has been reduced by over 38pc to Rs40bn for FY 2025-26 from Rs 65bn for FY2024-25.

On the other hand, subsidy allocation for K-Electric has also been scaled down by 28pc, from Rs174bn in the outgoing fiscal year to Rs125bn for next year.

Likewise, the TDS for Azad Jammu and Kashmir has also been slashed by 31.5pc from Rs108bn this year to Rs74bn.

The subsidy allocation for Pakistan Energy Resolving Fund — meant to ensure timely payments to Chinese investors — has been protected at Rs48bn while TDS for the tribal region has been cut by 39pc from Rs65bn to Rs40bn instead.

However, a subsidy allocation of Rs400bn has been made in the budget, slightly higher than Rs394bn in FY2025-26.

The power division said its petition was in line with the National Electricity Policy, 2021 which provided under Clause 5.6.1 that the "financial sustainability of the sector is premised on the recovery of full cost of service, to the extent feasible, through an efficient tariff structure, which ensures sufficient liquidity in the sector".

It said the proposed tariff was in line with the Nepra-determined rates for all Discos, the socio-economic objectives and budgetary targets.

The latest uniform tariff for Discos was set by Nepra through its determination dated July 13, 2024 that had been notified on July 14.
The Power Division said it had submitted to the federal cabinet on Saturday (June 28) the proposed uniform tariff.

Accordingly, the uniform tariff, being reflective of the federal government's economic and social policy and based on the consolidated revenue requirement approved and determined by the regulator, was anticipated to receive unchanged approval.

The Power Division said the government will also maintain a uniform consumer-end tariff for K-Electric and Discos, even after their privatisation, through direct or indirect subsidies.

Accordingly, KE applicable uniform variable charge is required to be modified to recover the revenue requirements of KE determined by the Nepra in view of the proposed targeted subsidy and cross subsidies.
(By Khaleeq Kiani Dawn, 01, 30/06/2025)

Union leader linked to power theft at Dhabeji station

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC) disconnected dozens of illegal electricity connections during an operation at the Dhabeji Pumping Station on Sunday. The connections were allegedly supplied from a union leader's residence to nearby unauthorised households. The wires were confiscated on the spot.

The operation targeted a bungalow allocated for an assistant engineer within the official staff housing near the Dhabeji Pumping Station. The residence was found to be the source of multiple illegal electricity lines extending to nearby homes and other locations.

According to local employees, official quarters provided by the corporation include free electricity and water. However, for several months, residents of the colony had been experiencing severe low-voltage issues. After conducting their own inquiry, they reportedly discovered that a CBA union leader living in one of the bungalows had been supplying illegal electricity connections in exchange for hefty monthly bribes.

The matter was reported to the department's chief engineer and the resident engineer at the pumping station, which led to the crackdown. Despite clear evidence of widespread power theft originating from the union leader's residence, the administration has yet to take any disciplinary action against the influential figure.

Sources also revealed that more than half of the government quarters at the Dhabeji Pumping Station, meant for KWSC employees, are illegally occupied by unauthorised individuals.

These occupants enjoy 24-hour access to free electricity, water, and gas, causing financial losses amounting to millions of rupees for the corporation every month.
(By Newspaper's Staff Reporter, The Express Tribune, 05, 30/06/2025)