


# Electricity policy

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THE government has finalised national electricity policy 2020 proposing sweeping changes in the messy power sector.

What seems good on paper doesn't mean it will be fruitful practically. A rosy picture was painted by the government before dismembering of the power wing of WAPDA into a number of generation, transmission and distribution companies besides structural changes at all levels.

The cost of increased management and new power organisations was, of course, passed on to the electricity consumers, who have been facing high billing, erratic power supply and skyrocketing electricity prices, which are highest in the region.

Instead of refining, consolidating and improving the existing power sector set-up, the government has been ill-advised to carry out further experimentation by introducing so-called reforms.

The proposed changes will entail extra expenditure at all levels of the power sector hierarchy, increasing the cost of operation. This will again be passed on to consumers.

The major pitfall in our policy making is the absence of requisite expertise and trained manpower. Even for the existing power set-up we are short of experienced manpower at all levels.

Before embarking upon more reforms, it is prudent to place it for public debate to examine it critically to ensure, beyond doubt, that it is technically sound, easily implementable and economically viable.

It must also be ensured that the new policy will not result in a tariff increase. A power system operation and delivery should not be deemed to be traded as other consumable commodities in the market. It is much more complex. It should be handled with utmost skill, care and foresight to avoid falling into another quagmire like the notorious circular debt.

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