

SHC directs K-Electric to end unannounced load-shedding in city

The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday directed K-Electric (KE) to end unannounced load-shedding and remove illegal connections from Karachi.

Hearing a petition against the unannounced load-shedding and illegal connections, a division bench of the SHC, headed by Justice Khadim Hussain M Sheikh, observed that citizens had been complaining against the prolonged load-shedding in different parts of the city and in such a situation, the licence of the power company should be suspended.

A counsel for KE submitted that illegal connections had been removed and wiring system upgraded in many areas. The high court observed that the unannounced load-shedding continued in several areas of the city and illegal connections had not been removed.

The counsel submitted that the KE teams could not even visit sites where repair work was required in several areas due to the law and order situation. He added that people restored illegal power connections once they were removed.

The high court inquired as to what action had been taken against people involved in power theft and illegal connections, and directed the KE counsel to submit a progress report on August 25.

Unattended waste

In another petition against non-removal of garbage in the North Karachi area, the high court directed the local government secretary to submit a report with regard to the removal of garbage in different parts of the city.

The SHC took exception to the non-removal of garbage from different parts of the city and observed that if the garbage was not disposed of, it would lead to outbreak of several epidemic diseases.

A representative of the local government department submitted that the removal of garbage was the responsibility of the District Municipal Corporations (DMCs). A provincial law officer submitted that the petitioner had not impleaded the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) as a respondent, which was also responsible to remove garbage in different districts of the city.

The SHC directed the petitioner's counsel to implead the SSWMB as a respondent in the petition and directed the local government department and DMCs to file comments on the petition.

Jl report

The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi has submitted a report to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) regarding what it called irregularities of KE, adds our correspondent.

The JI claimed in its report that the power utility did not restructure its power generation, distribution and transmission network after becoming a private entity 15 years back.

"The entity intentionally slowed down the power generation capacity in order to increase its revenue by curtailing furnace oil and natural gas consumption cost," said JI Karachi chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman. .

The report also pointed out that Sui Southern Gas Company had increased its gas supply to the power utility to 150 -290 million cubic feet per day (mmcf), including 75-100 mmcf liquefied natural gas.

The JI maintained that KE on various pretexts had consistently been claiming of fuel and gas shortage and in the meantime, the petroleum division had also been providing 80 per cent of the residual fuel oil production to the KE power plants, he said.

In addition to that, the federal government was supplying 800 megawatts per day to KE through the National Transmission and Distribution Company (NTDC) and was willing to add 500 megawatts to that but the dilapidated transmission and distribution system of KE did not allow that, the JI leader said.

The report stated that KE had closed down one of Bin Qasim plants on the pretext of technical fault and the power utility was in a habit of utilising power plants to a minimum capacity.

The JI maintained that due to the faulty power system of KE, more than 50 citizens had lost their lives in electrocution incidents during the last two monsoon seasons while due to the heatwave, according to government estimates, around 1,500 people were killed amidst poor supply of power.

According to the JI, KE did not return or make adjustments to consumers, an amount of nearly Rs25 billion it claimed in the head of back-claw, he said. Inflated bills and long-hours load-shedding have become the order of the day, the JI leader termed.