

**Karachiites continue to suffer power outages amid Covid-19 outbreak**

KARACHI: Karachiites are continue to witnessing prolonged and unannounced power outages amid sizzling summer and Covid-19 outbreak, while K-Electric blamed the shortage of adequate fuel for this grim situation.

Prolonged power cut, particularly in night hours, is prompting people [especially the residents of slum neighborhoods] to spend their nights on narrow streets of their respective areas. This practice could cause further spread of Covid-19 amongst deprived citizens, as Karachi ranks top in terms of Covid-19 patients compared to the rest of the country.

The unannounced load shedding could also deepen the sense of anxiety and frustration among hundreds of Covid-19 patients who are completing self-isolation period at their homes, in Karachi.

The worst affected areas include, Korangi, Landhi, Mehmoodabad, Malir, Lines Area, Banaras, Nazimabad and North Nazimabad, Liaquatabad, Lyari, Orangi Town, AB Cenia Lines, Saddar, Golimar, etc where electricity remains absent for an average 8 to 12 hours in a day.

"Karachi has such massive leadership vacuum that K-Electric can overcharge clients almost 3 times their usual bill and do both announced and unannounced loadshedding for several hours, yet there's no one to raise voice or hold them accountable," said a consumer Osama on twitter.

"Really annoyed by prolonged power cuts in the name of maintenance work and fuel shortage by KElectricPk in this hot weather of Karachi," said another consumer, Huma

In a recent statement, National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepa) said it would initiate an investigation into forced power outages in Karachi.

The power regulator also noted that inflated electricity bills were being charged to consumers. "Strict directions have been given to K-Electric to take remedial measures and submit a detailed report to Nepa immediately."

It added that consumers who were receiving exorbitant bills could file complaints with Nepa's regional office in Karachi or through their website, by providing the relevant documents.

Meanwhile K-Electric, in a statement has expressed concern about power situation on account of fuel shortage.

It said K-Electric Board Meeting held on June 25, the Board expressed serious concerns about the inconvenience suffered by KE's valued customers due to frequent power outages resulting from KE's inability to procure adequate fuel stock.

The meeting was chaired by Riyadh S A A Edrees, with other Board members and KE's Management in attendance. Amongst other matters, the Board laid special emphasis on the recent power disruptions in Karachi. KE management briefed the Board about the furnace oil and gas shortages in the country and unavailability of adequate fuel to KE severely impacting its power generation.

It was also clarified that this shortage is at the national level shortage and that KE was not the only company affected. While the Board appreciated the federal government's commitment to resolve the issue and to allow furnace oil imports, they also urged KE management to further expand their efforts with the fuel suppliers and relevant government entities for earliest continuation of fuel supply to KE in order to provide immediate due relief to its valued customers.

On behalf of KE's customers and its management, the Board also appealed for relevant authorities' urgent attention to this matter, and expressed hope that this situation would be fully resolved in the next 4-5 days.

Amongst other matters, the Management also apprised the Board about KE's proactive measures to manage the expected surge in power demand during peak summer.