

**Load-shedding in Karachi, Hurdle to taking additional power from national grid identified**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday K-Electric's (KE's) system constraints are main hurdle to taking 500MW additional electricity from national grid as the power utility did not invest in system upgradation.

On June 4, 2020 KE's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Moonis Alvi, had conveyed to the federal government that currently 77 per cent of area of Karachi is load-shedding free. However, the power utility has to carry out load management for 23 percent of the consumers during day/evening peak hours

He requested the government that to give relief to Karachiites especially during night hours, KE may be allowed to draw additional 100 MW from NKI and Jamshoro which will bring total drawl to 750MW.

On Friday, a spokesperson for Power Division said that the Federal Government is providing 800MW electricity to KE and is ready to provide an additional 500MW from national grid but the KE system's physical constraints are a major hurdle to taking the additional electricity.

"It clearly indicates that system upgradation on part of KE has not taken place at the appropriate level and with appropriate investment," he added.

According to National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), it has been noted from the daily operational data of KE's power plants that average shortfall of the power utility 's system for the last few days remained 400 MW which translates into load shedding of 3 hours(approximately) whereas according to media reports massive load shedding ( 9-12 hours) is being carried out by the KE in different areas which indicates that in addition to shortage of furnace oil issue, load shedding is being done by KE for "unknown" reasons.

Power Division spokesperson said that Federal Cabinet while keeping in view the general welfare of the people of Karachi has already approved provision of additional 1100MW from the national grid to KE. However, the KE system is not able to absorb the additional electricity at present and its system up-gradation will go on until 2022-23 to fully take the additional supply.

The supply of LNG is available but on account of Article 158, only a limited quantity of LNG is being taken by KE. SSGC is providing a total of 250 - 290 MMCFD of gas including 75 - 100 MMCFD of LNG.

Meanwhile, the Petroleum Division has made arrangements for supply of 80% of Pakistan domestic RFO production to KE to run its power plants. In addition, the Federal Government has also made arrangements for supply of 30,000 tons of RFO from storage of other power plants to immediately fulfill requirements of KE.

The spokesperson added that the Federal Cabinet also allowed for Pakistan State Oil to float a Gallop International Tender to purchase RFO for KE. The tender has already been published.

The Federal Cabinet also approved provision and allocation of 150 mmcf of LNG for new power plants of KE, the construction of which will be completed by KE by next year in 2021.

The spokesperson claimed that the steps taken by the federal government clearly indicate that the Federal Government has gone out of its way to provide support to KE and the people of Karachi besides running the industries and businesses. "It is unfortunate to note that KE did not make the investment in the system up-gradation and modernization due to which it is facing difficulty at the time of peak demand," he added. The Federal Government is ready to extend all available support for provision of uninterrupted power supply to the residents of Karachi, the spokesperson concluded.