

PM's Secretariat takes notice of delay in resolving consumers' complaints by DISCOs

LAHORE: The Prime Minister Secretariat has taken a strong notice for delaying the resolution of consumers' complaints by the power distribution companies (DISCOs), said sources.

According to the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) sources, Director General Implementation Department Sardar Amanul has issued a circular to all the circles of the company, stating that the PM Secretariat has taken a strong notice of the situation. It further pointed out that the Secretariat has decided to review the situation on daily basis in order to ensure timely resolution of complaints.

The sources said the complaint cells of DISCOs are non-cooperative to the consumers and the complaints remain unattended for long time. Especially, the situation has worsened after a slowdown in Coronavirus pandemic.

According to the sources, the DISCOs management has intentionally slowed down a timely action against complaints in order to improve recoveries. They said the DISCOs have started withdrawing the Corona relief from consumers, which was extended during the period of lockdown.

The sources said DISCOs have stopped offering instalments in payment of electricity bills to industrial, commercial and domestic consumers. Notices have been displayed in this respect in all sub-divisions, divisions and circles offices. Accordingly, the consumers have started filing complaints against DISCOs on the PM Secretariat website, pointing out the non-cooperative attitude of DISCOs.

It may be noted that the latest electricity bills are being charged in total that has caused problems for consumers. They said DISCOs are adamant to expedite recovery by 100 percent in their respective regions.

The DISCO's customers are primarily classified as domestic, agriculture, industry and other utilities. The domestic segment covers predominately almost 80% of clients, which is expanding at an average of 3.6% per annum for the past decade, transforming the electricity grid into a complex system leading to enhanced trouble while it arises to forecast the load supervision at peak hours. The admittance to electricity to the population has relatively risen in the last few years. The industrial customers are also expanding including textile, cement, and leather industries, which need constant electricity supplies. The commercial sector generally constitutes high tension (HT) customers and is rising at 2.46% in regards to electricity clients. In the meantime, EC in the agriculture sector is expanding 3.02% annually, granting employment to approximately half of the residents of the state.

Sources said multifaceted reasons are behind the rising number of complaints on the part of consumers. The factors included growing urbanization rate, high transmission and distribution losses, corruption, power theft, lack of deployment latest smart technologies and the absence of advanced metering infrastructure need an immediate response from all spheres of the government.