



Why do feeders trip?

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LAHORE and many cities of Punjab and north Pakistan are having rains and large areas go without electricity. The media reported that in Lahore alone over 300 feeders had ‘tripped’. What is this nonsense? Lots of cities the world over have torrential rains – think of cities in the equatorial belt: Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong and Bangkok, but we never hear about power outages because ‘feeders trip’.

Some European countries — Belgium, Holland, northern France, Britain, Denmark, Ireland, etc have rains throughout the years. Recently, Germany and France had spells of heavy rain, but we didn’t hear of any power outages. Obviously, the rain in itself cannot be blamed for power outages, because Lahore may experience heavy rains but it still gets less rain than what many of the cities in the countries mentioned above do. South-East Asian countries have heavy downpours, but we do not hear of feeders ‘tripping’. This also means that it is not nature but the quality of our electrical engineering that is responsible for ‘tripping’.

Let us note that rain doesn’t immediately provide relief from heat; it takes time for the temperature to come down. But when electricity goes off, people suffer in a hot humid weather without fans and air-conditioners. While we do need the monsoon so that we could also store rain water, we also need better engineering. In Karachi also, we hear the same problem – the feeders going phut even at the slightest of showers.

I suggest experts at Wapda and the so many power distribution companies we have should sit together and sort out the problem and determine why the feeders fail to operate whenever it rains. Obviously it is bad workmanship or perhaps the quality of equipment.

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Sometimes it is not power stations that fail; many a time wires snap. These live wires often lead to electrocution because people run into them when it is dark. Quite often we hear blasts in transformers followed by a painfully wrong period of life without power. Why do transformers explode? All over the world, we do not hear of this, except in exceptional cases of cyclones. In our case, it is ‘normal’ rain and not cyclones that cause havoc and upset civic life. We need a holistic approach.

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