

Mulk takes stock of power situation

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MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN & ZAHEER ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Nasir-ul-Mulk has expressed dissatisfaction over the figures of power generation and distribution presented to him. He has directed the high-ups of the Power Division to submit him detailed figures.

He gave these directions at a maiden meeting with the Power Division officials at a time when the shortfall has touched 10,000 MW which accounts for massive load-shedding across Pakistan.

Secretary Power division, Yousuf Naseem Khokhar, MD PEPCO, Musaddiq Ahmed Khan, MD NTDC, Zafar Abbas and other senior officials on Tuesday gave a briefing to the Prime Minister on overall outlook of power sector and also stated that lack of cooperation by the provinces in recovery of billed amount was also one of the reasons for financial problems of power sector.

Additionally, sources added that prevailing ad hocism in the power sector distribution companies (Discos) and NTDC top level was responsible for power sector poor performance as well as previous government's entire focus during the last five years on power generation and nothing was done to improve the system.

Well-informed sources told Business Recorder that the caretaker Prime Minister was 'politely annoyed' at Power Division's officials for ignoring transmission and distribution systems due to which generated electricity is not being supplied to the consumers.

Sources said that Power Division maintained that the required administrative support was not being provided to address the recovery issues and consequently losses of power sector have been increasing.

Prime Minister said he will take up the matter with caretaker Chief Ministers as soon as the process of their selection is completed. He stated that every effort would be made by the federal government to get the required administrative support from the provincial governments towards addressing enforcement issues in the power sector.

While discussing administrative and technical issues resulting in high system losses and power theft, the caretaker Prime Minister expressed concern over the huge losses in various Discos and directed Power Ministry to start taking steps for the curtailment of these losses.

He further observed that a comprehensive plan should be prepared which would help the next elected government in further improving efficiency and sustainability of the sector.

Secretary Power division briefed the Prime Minister about overall outlook of the power sector including generation, transmission and electricity distribution in the country.

Power Division informed the caretaker Prime Minister that as compared to 18,753MW in 2013, the current available generation capacity stands at 28,704MW. He was also informed that due to weather conditions and the resultant reduced water supply, the hydel generation in May 2018 remained at 3,090 MW as compared to 6,333 MW in 2015.

The meeting was informed that every effort is being made to ensure strict implementation of the load management plan which was approved by the Cabinet for the month of Ramazan. The key issue, sources said, has been noted in transmission of electricity from south to north due to less hydel generation from Tarbela and Mangla.

“We are facing issues in Burhan transmission line, Mangla, Rawat and Gatti grid stations, in addition to obsolete distribution system,” the sources added.

When contacted, Secretary Power Division, Yousuf Naseem Khokhar who assumed charge on June 1, 2018 after two weeks long leave due to his strained working relations with the former Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Leghari said that the Power Division gave one hour presentation on the power sector achievements, technical and financial constraints.

He was of the view that the country's power demand has crossed 26000 MW due to massive use of air conditioners and other electric appliances.

When the Secretary said that power demand has crossed 26,000 MW, a board displaced in the Power Division's corridor was showing generation of 16,000 MW plus, wh