
PM directs authorities to minimise load-shedding as country sizzles

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As the country sweltered under intense heat with mercury crossing the 50-degree mark in many parts of the country, particularly in Sindh, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to minimise the ongoing load-shedding in different areas through better load management, considering the public relief in sizzling weather. The prime minister, chairing a meeting on load management and power theft, reiterated that the government would deal strictly with the power thieves and that the ongoing mission against them would be taken to the logical end. Vowing to hold a monthly review of the power theft situation, he asked the provincial governments, law enforcement agencies and other departments to extend their support in the anti-power theft drive in the national interest and for the country's progress. The prime minister told the participants of the meeting that the government in no way would tolerate the over-billing.

He directed the acceleration of the privatisation process of the power distribution companies by engaging the experts and formulating a strategy to solarise the tube wells in Balochistan. During the briefing on load management and power theft issue, it was told that under a joint strategy formulated following a conversation between the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and federal minister for power, it had been agreed to reduce load-shedding and line losses and ensure recovery of dues from defaulters in the province. It was told that areas with more power theft and line losses and low recovery ratio were being subjected to load-shedding and that the upgradation of the south-north power transmission line would help improve the system. The meeting participants were told that task forces were being formed at provincial and divisional levels to eliminate the power theft which would undergo a weekly performance review. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Dr Musaddik Malik and Awais Ahmed Leghari, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik, Coordinator to PM Rana Ehsan Afzal, WAPDA chairman and relevant senior officers. The provincial chief secretaries and inspector generals of police joined the meeting via video link.