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Energy sector woes becoming a chronic issue for national economy: Mustafa Kamal

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Senior leader of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) Syed Mustafa Kamal expressed concerns over the growing issues within Pakistan's energy sector, stating that the annual circular debt now surpasses the entire national development budget. Kamal made these remarks during a press conference at MQM-P's central election office in Karachi on Thursday. He emphasised that

MQM-P is a responsible political party that not only identifies problems but also proposes practical solutions. He pointed out that, globally, citizens have the option to choose from multiple electricity providers, allowing them to select the best service for their needs. In contrast, in Pakistan, each city is monopolised by a single electricity provider, leading to severe customer dissatisfaction and exploitation. Former Karachi mayor criticised the monopoly held by these companies, stating that the lives of citizens have become unbearable due to the lack of competition. He noted that law-abiding citizens who regularly pay their bills are unfairly charged for electricity theft by others, and the electricity supply is reduced as a means to control these losses. In Karachi, residents endure up to 18 hours of load shedding, affecting even those who pay hefty bills, he maintained. While MQM-P is not opposed to the privatisation of distribution companies, Kamal stressed the importance of scrutinising the objectives behind such privatisation. He quoted the example of K-Electric, the outcomes of which are still adversely affecting the public, he maintained. Kamal proposed multiple electricity providers should be licensed across the country, similar to the telecom sector, to ensure both quality and affordability, preventing any single company from establishing a monopoly. He further suggested that Pakistan should engage with institutions and friendly nations to restructure debt payments owed in dollars.