

Power sector set for major leap

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MUSCAT: The Sultanate's power sector has achieved tremendous growth on various fronts, including power generation, distribution network and number of consumers, said a top-level official of the state-owned Muscat Electricity Distribution Company (MEDC).

The number of consumers jumped by 100,000, while power distribution and consumption rate soared by 50 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively, in the last five years between 2005 and 2009, said Eng. Zahir bin Abdullah Al Abri, general manager of MEDC, in a statement.

Referring to the progress on other fronts, Abri, who cited data released by the Electricity Regulatory Authority, said that the installed capacity of connected network grew by 1055MW during the five year period.

The government has invested around RO582 million to strengthen networks, establish new power projects and upgrade equipment related to electricity service.

"Electricity sector is witnessing rapid growth that reflects the growth of urban and economic development of the country in all sectors," he said.

He also noted that the property developers should apply for power connection in advance, which will help the power companies to strengthen distribution network in advance or build new distribution and transmission facilities to new buildings.

Eng. Abri indicated that the regulation on connecting electricity services is a quantum leap in the field of electricity supply to subscribers.

"Once the subscriber submits his request for electricity connection, the regulation will be referenced and in the light of it, connection is planned and the subscriber is informed of the requirements he must fulfil," he said.

Real estate project

Eng. Abri said that when work on any real estate project begins, electricity is directly connected as per the regulation in any layout that has networks and excess capacities. Housing and other projects have been given priority.

He also mentioned that it is inappropriate and unfeasible to extend electricity grids in empty layouts that do not have any houses because this is a waste of resources and public money.

Further, he said, the electric networks in uninhabited layouts are usually vulnerable to sabotage of various kinds. The unreasonable requests like power connection in a remote area cannot be met because of certain priorities.

Eng. Abri added that electricity services, such as any service, are subject to controls whether in terms of connection or usage, not to mention the high cost of extending these services.

On addressing certain issues, he said that power consumers can submit his complaint to the electricity company. It is then reviewed and rectified. If the subscriber remains unsatisfied, he can complain to Electricity Regulation Authority.

The climate, he said, is healthy and the consumers should not hesitate in asking for his right.