

Wapda protest continues

OUR STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE - The Wapda workers on Wednesday staged protest demonstrations and took out rallies across the country including Lahore against the proposed privatisation of Wapda-owned GENCOs and power distribution companies.

Holding placards and banners, under the aegis of the Wapda Hydro Electric Central Labour Union, they demanded of the government to 'ease the sufferings of the people against skyrocketing price-hike of electricity. The protesters held that tariff of RPPs and IPPs were resulting in serious load shedding. They added RPPs were also for not building coal fired thermal power stations despite having largest coal reservoirs in the world.

They said that the government has been importing furnace oil amounting \$14 billion every year but it was not availing fully 12,000 MW hydel power generation capacities. According to a statement, the protests were held in Quetta, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larakna, Nawabshah, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpiir, DG Khan, Shahiwal, Multan, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Sargodha, Jhang, Faisalabad, Jhelum, Attock, Rawalpindi, Mardan, Sawat, Peshawar and others cities of the country.

At Lahore, the workers took out mass procession from Bakhtiar Labour Hall and marched through various roads and held a mass rally at Lakshmi Chowk participated by the hundreds of workers. They raised slogans against IMF and World Bank and anti-poor policies of the government. Led by Union Secretary General Khurshid Ahmad and Malik Noor Muhammad, Syed Zahid Hussain Shah, Syed Sajjad Shah, Osama Tariq, Ch Maqsood, Syed Sajid Kazmi, Naveed Dogar, Haji Muhamamd Younis and others, they condemned the 'flawed policies of the government which had plunged the country into serious load shedding of gas and electricity. Mr Khurished criticized the NEPRA's decision to recover fuel adjustment charges for two months simultaneously from the poor consumers and condemned the proposed decision of the privatisation of management of nine national thermal power stations and disbanding national unified electricity institutional frame-work and handing over DISCOs to

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