

Business

Power Drops Below 2,800mw – NERC

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LAGOS

Following the Federal Government claim of vandalism on the gas pipelines which it said led to drastic reduction in peak power supply through the national grid from over 5,000 megawatts to less than 3,500 megawatts on Tuesday, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) on Wednesday said power supply has further dropped below 2,800mw.

Dr. Anthony Akah, the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the commission disclosed this while signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Consumer Protection Council (CPC).

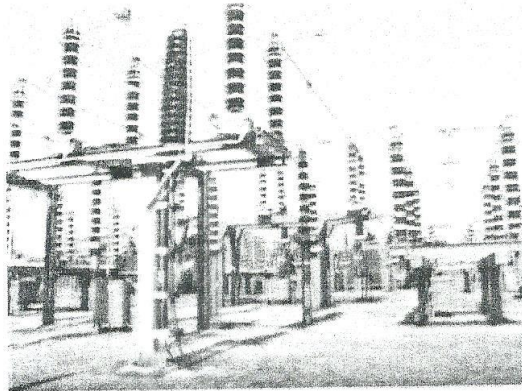
A statement issued on the ceremony by Dr. Usman Abba- Arabi, Head, Public Affairs Department of NERC was made available to newsmen on Wednesday in Abuja.

In the statement, Akah expressed dissatisfaction and worries over the state of vandalism in the power sector.

It stated that the NERC boss enjoined the public and the CPC to collaborate with Distribution Companies (DISCOs) and security agencies to safeguard electrical installations.

The statement also said that the NERC would soon compel the DISCOs to publish their meter deployment schedules.

It added that the publication would



ensure adherence to the meter roll out plan contained in the performance agreement signed with government by the utility firms.

“Such publication will make unmetered customers to be aware of the estimated period they have to wait before they can be metered,” it stated.

It stated that NERC had issued warning to the DISCOs against wrongful estimated billings and the acts of

compelling customers to buy, install and repair transformers and poles.

The statement said the MoU between, NERC and CPC was part of concerted efforts to reduce the incidence of estimated billing completely.

According to the statement, the Director General of CPC, Mrs. Modupe Atoki, commended NERC for the long standing relationship between the two agencies.

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Atoki, according to the statement, expressed CPC's cooperation and renewed effort to protect electricity consumers from abuse of their rights.

She, however, said that the Commission will soon compel electricity distribution companies to publish their meter deployment schedules so as to ensure adherence to the performance agreement signed with government by the utility firms. According to him, “such publication will make unmetered customers to be aware of the estimated period they have to.

Arase Stops Illegal Shutting Down Of Telecoms Infrastructure

EMMANUEL OKWUKE
LAGOS

The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mr. Solomon Arase has directed that no government agencies, States and Local Governments should use the Police to shutdown Telecom Infrastructure across the country, without genuine court order and clearance from the office of the IGP.

He stated this when a delegation of members of the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), the Umbrella Association for all providers of telecom service in Nigeria paid the IGP a visit at the Police Headquarters in Abuja.

To ensure that the order is promptly carried out, the IGP immediately called his Chief Protocol Officer DSP.

Tinja Mazam to send signals to all the State Police Commissioners that on no account should any Policeman be deployed or involved in the process of shutting down Telecom Infrastructures without proper clearance. He said they will continue to educate their people on how important telecom infrastructures are to the security of the country.

The IGP Arase said that policing has passed the stage of physical points, where you see Policemen everywhere. The IGP stated that in Britain they have over 185,000 street cameras monitoring the activities of people in the country and this makes it easier to arrest any criminal.

IGP Arase said he is passionate in bringing the Nigerian Police Force out of Analogue to digital platform.

The IGP stated that he has a robust relationship

with the telecoms operators and the Association when he was the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in charge of Intelligence.

Earlier, the delegation led by the Chairman, ALTON, Mr. Gbenga Adebayo had asked IGP Arase to sanction all erring police officers who collaborate with different arms of government and rural communities to impose unlawful taxes and forcefully short down telecoms facilities.

Mr. Adebayo said that members of ALTON cuts across the entire operating structure of the industry, including network operations, infrastructure as well as other critical Value Added and support services. “Telecommunications development in Nigeria is playing an integral role in our March towards a greater Count. Telecommunication services have greatly improved our qual-

ity of life as a people. From basic voice call, to internet services and to numerous value added offered by our members”.

The ALTON Boss noted that despite the above progress made, they are still facing a number of environmentally related problems in particular, on the issues of interference with the smooth operations of telecom services.

He listed some of these challenges to include: Closure of BTS Sites without Court Order. “The incidence of closure of our members’ BTS sites and other telecommunications infrastructure on the excuse of non-payment of arbitrarily imposed taxes and levies imposed by States and Local Government Authorities in the name of Internally generated revenue (IGR) is having adverse effect on our quality of service”.

Another challenge he

noted is in the area of Taxes and Levies (Approved list for Collection) Law of 1998: “This law states in its section 2 (1) that members of the Nigeria Police shall only be used to collect taxes in accordance with Tax laws. It also provides that no person, including a tax authority shall use road blocks to collect taxes.

“A reading of section 2 (1) and (2) together can only lead to the conclusion that the police force should only intervene in collection of taxes pursuant to lawful order. Sir, we hereby request that you kindly direct all Police commands to kindly and strictly enforce taxation demands pursuant to court orders only.

In the case of telecommunications companies, such order should only be orders of the federal high court since telecommunications is on the exclusive legislative list.

