

KWSB gets approval to increase water tariff by 82pc

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI, Aug 2: A meeting of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board has given approval to the management of the utility to increase the water tariff by 82 per cent for residential-cum-domestic and bulk/commercial consumers and also decided to do away with subsidised water rates for bulk consumers.

It means that the water utility's bulk consumers, who were currently being charged at the rate of Rs119 per thousand gallons, would now be required to pay their water bills at the rate of Rs215 per thousand gallons with effect from August.

The new rates for domestic-cum-residential consumers, who are charged on the basis of the area of their houses and flats, were being calculated and would be made public in a couple of days.

The KWSB Board met here on Monday after a passage of two-and-a-half years with its vice chairman Haji Munnawar Ali Abbasi in the chair.

Sindh Local Government Minister Agha Siraj Durrani, Karachi Commissioner Mohammad Hussain Syed, Additional Chief Secretary (development) Mohammad Ishaq Lashari, LG Secretary Ali Ahmed, Industries Secretary Zameer Ahmed Khan, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industries President

Mohammad Saeed Shafiq, Karachi Port Trust's chairperson Nasreen Haq, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's Municipal Commissioner Altaf G. Memon, all the five deputy commissioners of the metropolis and KWSB Managing Director Misbauhuddin Farid attended the meeting.

The board took notice of the fact that the KWSB, during the last decade, had increased its tariff by nine per cent only four times although the Sindh government, through a notification issued in 2002, had allowed it to do so each year.

The board meeting directed the KWSB to enhance its tariff by 80 per cent to cover the period when it did not make any increase, as such a move would help the water utility to come out of a financial crisis.

Discussing the issue of bulk consumers, who were being supplied water at subsidised rates, the board decided to do away with such a concession with immediate effect and whatever concession had to be given it should be for domestic consumers, instead of bulk consumers.

Reviewing the city's water and sewerage development projects, the meeting with a view to providing better water supply and sewerage service to the citizens resolved to imple-

ment them expeditiously and in this connection the board decided to have a monthly meeting so that measures aimed at removing hindrances in undertaking these plans could be removed with a consensus.

The meeting also decided that the chief minister would be requested to immediately appoint the chairman of the board so its formulation could be completed in all respect.

LG Minister Durrani asked the KWSB to chalk out a comprehensive plan against illegal hydrants in coordination with the district administration and the police so as to ensure that the hydrant mafia was eliminated once for all.

Earlier, the KWSB managing director briefed the participants of the meeting that the water utility in a short span of just six months had eliminated over 117 illegal hydrants.

He, however, stressed the need for making amendments in existing rules so that the operators of unlawful hydrants could be dealt with sternly.

Unfolding the KWSB financial plan, he apprised the board members of the difficulties being faced in its implementation and sought their cooperation in this regard.

With regard to ever-increasing

electricity bills, which had eaten away a major portion of the KWSB revenue, the meeting decided that the management of both the KWSB and the Karachi Electric Supply Company should resolve the issue amicably.

The KCCI president informed the meeting that the chamber had undertaken a number of power projects on a built-operate-and-transfer (BOT) basis and similar projects could be discussed and implemented with the KWSB so it could get electricity at much reasonable rates that what it was paying to the power utility.

Earlier, the board gave approval for setting up 11 reverse osmosis plants in Lyari and Keamari to overcome water shortage in these localities.

Later, Mr Durrani told newsmen that the board had taken a number of decisions which were not only aimed at improving the city's water and sewerage system but also to implement the development projects without any delay.

With regard to the huge amount of water charges outstanding against the federal and Sindh governments, the minister said that he would help the utility in recovering its outstanding dues from both the federal and provincial governments.