

# UPERC switches on consumer-friendly steps

**Brajendra K Parashar**

bkparashar@htlive.com

**LUCKNOW:** An OTP-based complaint resolution system, stricter billing protocols, enhanced compensation guidelines and measures to prevent overcharging under single-point connections are among the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission's series of consumer-friendly directives aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and service quality in the power sector.

The announcements are part of the commission's latest tariff order in which the power regulator chose to keep the electricity rates for all the consumers unchanged for the fifth consecutive year.

## OTP SYSTEM

Consumers will now receive an OTP on their registered mobile numbers after filing a complaint. The complaint will be closed only when the OTP is provided after satisfactory resolution, curbing fake complaint closures.

## BUILDERS TOLD NOT TO OVERCHARGE

The commission has cracked down on builders overcharging



The state's power demand crossed 30,000 MW in May 2024 FILE

under single-point connections. Builders must align their billing with the commission's approved tariffs and publish the bills. Non-compliance will result in penalties, with power companies ordered to create a dedicated website to ensure transparency.

## COMPENSATION GUIDELINES ON BILLS

UPERC has mandated that power companies provide detailed instructions on how consumers can claim compensation for service disruptions or accidents, including web links, on the back of electricity bills.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Power companies are now allowed to send bills via email,

WhatsApp, or other digital platforms. However, each bill must include complete billing details and carry the signature of an authorised representative to prevent disputes and ensure accountability.

## MANDATORY DISCLOSURE

Power companies must publish the details of electrical accidents and compensation payments on their websites, including the amount disbursed and the timeline of each case, for public scrutiny. The commission has also introduced new provisions allowing consumers with connected loads between 3 kW and 5 kW to opt for three-phase connections. This decision, aimed at improving in-house load man-

agement and phase balancing, comes in response to growing consumer awareness and rising electricity demand across the state.

In May 2024, peak power demand in Uttar Pradesh crossed 30,000 MW, driven largely by the increased use of air conditioning among domestic consumers, who account for nearly 50% of the state's total load. As living standards rise, consumers are increasingly demanding uninterrupted power supply with improved quality.

Previously, only connections with loads above 5 kW were eligible for three-phase meters, as mandated by the state's electricity supply code. However, during public hearings, many consumers requested the option to install three-phase meters even for loads below the 5 kW threshold.

## RECORD PEAK DEMAND

The commission noted that the state's power demand crossed 30,000 MW in May 2024, driven largely by increased use of air conditioners among domestic consumers. This trend reflects higher living standards and rising consumer expectations for

uninterrupted and high-quality power supply.

Responding to complaints about arbitrary increases in sanctioned load, the commission has aligned its provisions with the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Amendment Rules, 2023. Any automatic load revision will now follow a structured mechanism, ensuring fairness and transparency.

Several consumers complained about power distribution companies arbitrarily increasing their sanctioned load.

The Commission has aligned these revisions with the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Amendment Rules, 2023, notified on June 14, 2023, which lay out a framework for automatic load adjustments when a consumer's demand exceeds the contracted limit.

To address these concerns transparently, the commission has introduced new provisions in the General Conditions of the Rate Schedule. These guidelines ensure that any increase in sanctioned load will be done systematically, following the prescribed mechanism.

The revised rules aim to prevent arbitrary load increases while promoting fair practices,