Before the
TRIPURA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Bidyut Bhawan, Bhutoria, banamalipur, Agartala - 799001.


CORAM:
SHRI D. RADHAKRISHNA, CHAIRMAN
SHRI JIBAN KRISHNA SEN, MEMBER

In the matter of implementation of the directions under section 108 of the Electricity Act 2003 to implement measures to minimize public interface in view of Coronavirus epidemic (COVID-19) – relaxation in TERC (Supply Code Regulation 2011 read with Standard of Performance Regulation -2004)

IN THE MATTER OF :

The Commission on its own motion

V/S

All interested Parties.

ORDER
(Date of Order : 04/04/2020)

1. The Government of Tripura, Power Department vide letter No. F. 3(5)/power/2005 P-II/3046, dated 2nd April, 2020 has issued the following direction reproduced as bellow:-

“To
The Chairman,
Tripura Electricity Regulatory Commission
Tripura, Agartala.

Sir,

Hon’ble Commission may be aware that all-out efforts are afoot to contain the rapid spread of Coronavirus epidemic in the country including Tripura. The Central Govt. and the State Govt. of Tripura have advised people to stay indoors and maintain social distancing.

2. As per Guidelines of Ministry of Power vide No 23/22/2019-R&R dated 28-06-2019 TSECL has opened Letter of Credit with NEEPCO, NTPC. GAIL and ONGC amounting to Rs. 68.36 crores. Due to precarious financial position TSECL is not in a position to continue Letter of Credit System for time being and Ministry of Power also requested CERC not to use coercive means for recovery dues and continue supply of electricity since it is an essential service as also recognised by MHA vide its order dated 24-03-2020.

3) Also, most of the meter reading staff is maintaining social distance and even residents are not allowing them to take meter reading mostly in rural areas and semi urban areas. TESCL is in a difficulty to raise the bills on actual readings. Recently Maharashtra has dispensed with actual physical meter reading and allowed average billing.

4) In view of the above, State Government under exercise of its power under Section 108 of Electricity Act 2003 hereby directs the commission to implement the following in the public interest and shall remain in force till such time the Govt. orders imposing restrictions on account of COVID-19 is in force:

DISCOM:

a. Distribution Licensee shall ensure continuity of supply. Complaints related to restoration of supply as also the safety related complaints shall continue to be attended by Distribution Licensee.

b. The Distribution Licensees may suspend other non-essential services which require visiting consumer premises or meeting consumer in person i.e. Meter reading, Billing, Offline Bill Collection at Bill Payment Centres, release of new connections etc.
c. Wherever Automated Meter Reading facility is available, same shall be used for meter reading.

d. In absence of Meter reading the Consumers shall be intimated through digital channels such as email, sms, mobile app about their estimated bill computed on average basis as per Supply Code Regulations.

e. For bill payment, Distribution Licensee shall facilitate and update alternate payment modes i.e. digital payment mode.

f. All the above measures shall be communicated through social media, electronic media and print media for wider publicity.

CONSUMERS:

a. Consumers may be encouraged to communicate their meter reading (figure & photo) to central customer care centre at 1912 / 2353502 / 2356470, whatsapp number 6033131224.

b. DISCOM may allow part payment / full payment (as per their capacity) facility to the consumers even after scheduled due date.

c. No disconnection should be carried out against non-payment till restriction withdrawn by authority.

d. Waiver of 50% or partial late payment surcharge for delayed payment during the period of lock down.

5) You are kindly requested to issue the practice directions / instructions immediately in the interest of public service.

Yours faithfully

Sd/

02/04/2020-
(Shashi Ranjan Kumar)
Principal Secretary to the Government of Tripura
2. In deference to the above directions, the Commission is pleased to issue the following order:-

i) Distribution Licensee shall ensure continuity of the supply and adopting all safety related complaints to be attended on priority.

ii) Distribution licensee will ensure all non-essential services which required visiting consumer premises the discontinued. The Commission directs that the even Metre reading, Billing, Offline Bill collection at Bill centres, realises of new connection etc. may be suspended for time being.

iii) Wherever Automated Meter Reading facility is available, the same shall be used for meter reading.

iv) In absence of Meter reading the Consumers shall be intimated through digital channels such as email, sms, mobile app about their estimated bill computed on average basis as per Supply Code Regulation.

v) For bill payment, Distribution Licensee shall facilitate and update alternate payment modes i.e. digital payment mode.

vi) All the above measures shall be communicated through social media, electronic media and print media for wider publicity.

vii) Consumers shall be encouraged to communicate their meter reading (figure & photo) to central customer care centre at 1912/ 2353502/2356470, whatsapp number 6033131224.

viii) DISCOM shall allow part payment/ full payment (as per their capacity) facility to the consumers even after scheduled due date.

ix) No disconnection should be carried out against non-payment till restriction withdrawn by the concerned authority.

x) Waiver of 50% of partial late payment surcharge for delayed payment shall be ensured during the period of lock down.
The above order is implemented with immediate effect from today till the normalcy is restored for which a separate order will be issued by the Commission.

3. With the above order, the Commission feels that the Distribution Company is complying with the order issued by CERC, New Delhi in respect of payment to the Central generating company as per order SUO MOTU PETITION NO. 6/SM/2020, Dated 3rd April, 2020.

4. The Secretary of the Commission is directed to send the copy of this order to all concern and give a wide publicity.

Sd/-
04/04/2020
( Jiban Krishna Sen )
Member
TERC, Agartala

( D. Radhakrishna )
Chairman
TERC, Agartala

Certified True Copy
Sd/
04-04-2020
( Er. H. K. Das )
Secretary
TERC, Agartala