

MPAs term gas load-shedding in Sindh violation of constitution

The Sindh Assembly on Thursday unanimously passed a resolution demanding that the federal government immediately end the load-shedding of natural gas in the province as the shortage of gas in houses, industries, and businesses could compel the distressed people of Sindh to resort to vociferous protests.

The resolution was tabled in the House by an opposition lawmaker belonging to the Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Muhammad Hussain Khan. Speaking on the resolution, Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said the federal government should convene a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) at the earliest to discuss the issue of gas shortage.

The CM lamented that the last CCI meeting, which was held on September 24, 2018, did not take up the issue of gas supply in the country despite the fact that the Sindh government had asked the Centre to include it in the agenda. “We are hopeful that the Sindh government will ensure the due constitutional rights of Sindh. We want to work together with the federal government.”

Murad also mentioned that the current CCI comprised three federal ministers who belonged to Sindh. He called for the political parties, to which the three federal ministers belonged, to raise voice for the rights of the province as defined in the Constitution.

The leader of the opposition belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Firdous Shamim Naqvi, maintained that raising voice in favour of the rights of the province was a collective responsibility.

The residents of Sindh had the first right to consume natural gas as the province accounted for a majority of the total volume of natural gas produced in the country, Naqvi said, adding that Sindh should be supplied gas on a priority basis so that the constitutional provision in this regard could be fulfilled. MQM-P legislator Khawaja Izharul Hassan also decried gas shortage in Karachi as it had badly affected industries of the city.

Census of private schools

Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah informed the assembly that a survey was being conducted to count privately run schools in the province, which was expected to be completed in the next one-and-a-half months.

Responding to a call-attention notice of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Tanzila Umme Habiba, the education minister said there were 12,300 registered private schools in the province.

Sardar claimed that the education department had started to make efforts to compel the privately run schools in the province to offer scholarships to their bona fide and qualified students. A private school with a registration of 2,000 students was required under the rules to offer scholarships to 200 of its pupils, he said.

Bill for dispute resolution

The assembly also unanimously passed the Code of Civil Procedure (Sindh Amendment) Bill-2018 to introduce and streamline the system of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in order to resolve civil disputes outside courts, which would lessen the burden on judicial system.

Azeem Samar