

### **PM orders reimbursement of inflated gas bills amount to consumers**

Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken serious notice of inflated gas bills for consumers and decided to pay back the additional amount charged by the gas companies. The prime minister chaired a meeting on an inquiry report of the four-member committee on inflated gas bills. According to details, the preliminary findings of inquiry report revealed that 30 percent gas consumers received inflated bills.

The prime minister chaired the meeting following a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCE) to review the gas committee report. Finance Minister Asad Umar chaired the meeting on inquiry/external audit of inflated bills for gas consumers.

It is yet to clear how the gas companies will return additional amount of those who received and deposited inflated bills. During winter, the gas bills of consumers showed higher increase which had compelled the consumers to protest in front of gas companies.

A committee constituted by the government to resolve the issue of inflated gas bills has submitted its report and proposed various options to revise the slab structure and billing mechanism to provide relief to the gas consumers.

One proposal is the one slab benefit to consumers, which means that the same slab should be charged with the same rate and above slabs, will be charged with the rate of that particular slab. This way the consumers can be protected from inflated bills. The other proposal is the last three slabs should be provided the slab benefits.

On February 12, the prime minister was informed that 91 percent consumers received 12 to 35 percent increase in the gas bills for December and less than 10 percent consuming 500 and 1000 cubic meter received higher bills. The statement of prime minister further claimed that Rs 100 billion worth subsidy was given to 91 percent gas consumers and majority of them was domestic consumers.

### **RECORDER REPORT**