

### **Unannounced gas load-shedding hits Karachi consumers**

KARACHI: Many domestic consumers of the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) have been complaining about low gas pressure or not getting any gas at all since the beginning of winter in the city, and the situation has worsened over the last couple of days.

The areas that have never experienced such a problem before are now also facing unannounced gas load-shedding or very low pressure in their stoves. The water in water geysers has turned cold as there is no gas to keep its flame on.

Gas crisis: it's the wastage, stupid

According to the SSGC spokesman, the company's gas system is losing pressure due to getting less gas than usual. But, he said, the situation was likely to improve as soon as the volume of stored gas in the line-pack improved. As a measure of damage control, he said, the SSGC had stopped the availability of compressed natural gas at CNG stations since 10pm on Thursday night and the shutdown would continue till Saturday morning.

Sindh Assembly passes resolution seeking end to gas outages; CM wants CCI to take up the issue

Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed deep concern over the incessant and prolonged gas outages across the province, which produces largest share of natural gas in the country.

This suspension of gas supply was creating lots of difficulties to the domestic as well as commercial consumers and badly affecting the provincial economy, he said and added that it was also a violation of Article 158 of the Constitution.

Article 158 reads: "The province in which a well-head of natural gas is situated shall have precedence over other parts of Pakistan in meeting the requirements from that well-head, subject to the commitments and obligations as on the commencing day."

The chief minister in a DO letter sent to Prime Minister Imran Khan has conveyed his deep concern over the incessant and prolonged gas outages across Sindh which is the largest contributor to nationwide gas production.

Mr Shah said that due to gas shortage, the domestic as well as commercial consumers were facing a lot of difficulties in the province. "This is gravely impacting the province's economy, industries and homes," he said.

The CM further said that gas production from Sindh was between 2,700-3,000 mmcf/d and against that the SSGC was supplying less than 1,200 mmcf/d to the province. Quoting Article 158 of the Constitution, he said that the people of Sindh had priority over the 2,700-3,000 mmcf/d of gas produced in the province.

He requested the prime minister to intervene in the matter and direct the ministry concerned to ensure regular supply of gas to Sindh as per its requirement and in line with Article 158 of the Constitution.

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

A resolution on the subject was also tabled in the Sindh Assembly by an opposition lawmaker from the Muttahida Qaumi Move-ment, Mohammad Hussain Khan, the other day.

The chief minister, speaking on the resolution, 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, held on Sept 24, 2018, had not taken up the issue of gas supply in the country though the Sindh government had asked the centre to include it in the agenda.

“We are hopeful that the federal government will ens-ure the due constitutional rights of Sindh. We want to work together with the federal government,” he added.

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

Meanwhile, Karachi Cha-m-ber of Commerce and Ind-ustry (KCCI) president Jun-aid Esmail Makda has clai-m-ed that gas supply has rem-ained suspended to ind--us-tries in different parts of the city, particularly the Site area, for the last three days.

Elsewhere, he said, the SSGC had kept gas pressure very low affecting production and causing problem for timely export shipment.

The business and industrial fraternities of Karachi were already suffering because of high cost of doing business and suspension of gas supply would prove detrimental for the industry and lead to worsening the economic crisis, besides raising poverty and unemployment, Mr Makda warned.

He hoped that Prime Minister Imran Khan would ask the ministry concerned to look into this serious issue on priority basis and take steps to restore gas supply to industries at adequate pressure so that they could smoothly operate without any kind of trouble.

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