

**Dispute of Sui gas field after 18th Amendment, Legal opinion to be sought from Law Division**

ISLAMABAD: The federal and the provincial governments have decided to seek legal opinion to settle the issue of ownership of the Sui gas field subsequent to 18th Constitutional Amendment.

An official said that meeting chaired by Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh on Thursday decided to seek legal opinion from the Law Division.

The official added that the lease agreement of Sui gas expired in 2015, and since then the lease agreement was being extended till 2019.

Meanwhile, negotiations between the federal and the provincial governments have been going on, and Balochistan government showed willingness to share the remaining life of the project with the federal government for the objective of investment in it.

The meeting decided to take legal opinion from the Law Division to solve the dispute of ownership, and whether after 18th Constitutional Amendment, the federal and the provincial governments can make a choice of 50/50 share in the field.

The adviser on finance decided that the representatives of the Government of Balochistan and the relevant federal ministers should hold further meetings with representatives of the Law Division for taking their expert advice, and firm up proposals with consensus, in a way that it benefits both the federal and provincial governments without violating the spirit of the 18th Constitutional Amendment, and the interests of any private party involved in the business.

The groups are expected to hold meeting within a month's time to firm up appropriate proposals for submission before the competent forum for final approval.

In the meeting, the Balochistan government was represented by secretary Energy Department Balochistan, and the federal government was represented by the Minister for Energy and the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Petroleum.

There were other members from the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination present at the meeting.

The meeting discussed various issues regarding the extension of lease of gas fields of Balochistan, rights and share of Government of Balochistan in the new and old oil and gas exploration business, rationalization of gas tariff for the local population, gas allocation to power plants and the creation of training fund for Balochistan.

For creating a training fund, it was decided that the matter would be resolved within a fortnight.