

### **SHC issues notices to SSGC, others on plea against gas shortage**

The Sindh High Court on Friday issued notices to the Sui southern Gas Company, the ministry of petroleum and other respondents on a petition against a shortage of gas and low gas pressures in the province.

Petitioner Syed Mehmood Akhtar Naqvi submitted that Sindh was a major gas-producing province, but the citizens were facing a gas shortage and low gas pressures in different districts of the province.

He submitted that the constitution of Pakistan provides that 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 the well-head, subject to the commitments and obligations as on the commencing day.

According to the petitioner, residential consumers are deprived of the gas supply for several hours in different parts of Karachi as well, while CNG stations had remained closed for the last several days due to a low gas pressure.

He requested the court to direct the government and the SSGC to restore the gas supply and ensure the required gas pressure for the residential and commercial consumers.

A division bench, headed by Justice Abdul Malik Gaddi, directed the petitioner to submit a list of gas reservoirs in the province and issued notices to the gas utility, the ministry of petroleum and others for their comments on January 14.

Centre for concrete action

A week ago, Federal Petroleum Minister Omar Ayub had directed the SSGC to take concrete measures to check a whopping gas shortfall that peaked at 350 million metric cubic feet/day (mmcf) after an energy crisis re-emerged to cripple industrial production and daily lives in the commercial hub.

During a visit to Karachi, he visited the SSGC office over the prevailing gas crisis and rescue calls from industrialists. He advised the state-owned utility to improve the supply situation in its areas of service.

The SSGC transmission system covers Sindh and Balochistan comprising over 3,614 kilometres of high pressure pipelines ranging from 12 to 42 in diameter. The distribution activities cover over 1,200 towns in the two provinces.

The petroleum minister, during the visit, was briefed on the supply, demand and unaccounted for gas (UFG) situation. He was informed that there was a shortage of 350mmcf of gas in the SSGC system, which hovered around 180mmcf in summers.

Ayub advised the company management to take concrete measures to reduce UFG, which is approximately more than 10 per cent of its total gas supply.

He said two main lines were being installed to connect gas fields in Sindh with the SSGC network, but some regulatory hurdles on part of the Sindh government delayed the projects. He advised the SSGC management to make all-out efforts to provide relief to the masses within its franchise areas of Sindh and Balochistan.

Secretary Petroleum Mian Hayad Din, SSGC Managing Director Muhammad Waseem, SSGC Deputy Managing Director Imran Farooqui and other senior officials of the company attended the meeting. Waseem briefed the minister regarding the measures undertaken by the company to curtail the demand-supply gap and reduce UFG ratios. With the arrival of winter, the natural gas crisis has worsened in Karachi with industrialists saying the gas shortage might bring industrial activities to a halt.