

SHC moved against increase in prices of petroleum products

A petition has been filed in the Sindh High Court on Tuesday against an increase by 4.2 per cent in petroleum products' prices by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority.

Pasban Democratic Party through its president Altaf Shakoor submitted in the petition that the federal government had increased by 4.2 per cent in the prices of the petroleum products on December 31 despite people already facing inflation.

He submitted that the government shifted the burden of its overspending, mismanagement and corruption onto the public and this act was done in violation of Article 77 of the constitution. He said that the increase in the petroleum products' prices would push inflation up for the industrial production, which was already under pressure because of higher electricity and gas rates and energy shortfalls.

The court was requested to declare the rise in the petroleum products' prices, including the increase in the petrol price from Rs113.99 per litre to Rs116 per litre, was unjust and in violation of Article 77 read with articles 4, 5, 9, 14, 18, and 25 of the constitution.

He said the formula to fix oil prices formulated by Ogra with the approval of the federal government was against the mandate of the people as the representatives of the people of Pakistan did not approve it through legislation in the parliament. The court was requested to direct the government to table such formula/ criteria for increasing and decreasing the prices of the petroleum products to get it approved by the parliament through the legislation.

KE put on notice

The Sindh High Court issued notices to the ministry of water and power, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority, K-Electric and others on a petition against the privatisation of the K-Electric and a recent increase of Rs4.90 per unit in electricity charges by the KE.

Petitioner Syed Mehmood Akhtar Naqvi submitted in the petition that the KE was privatised in November 2005 and since then citizens had been facing loadshedding and low voltage problems in different parts of the city.

He stated that the KE had failed to improve the electric supply system in the city and did not improve its power capacity to meet the requirements of the city. He alleged that the KE failed to make any investment as promised at the time of privatisation to upgrade its power stations and transmission lines and improve the power supply system in the city despite billions of rupees having been obtained from citizens in the name of fuel adjustment and other charges.

He submitted that the KE did not fulfil the agreement with regard to increasing the power capacity and upgradation of the power supply network, and requested the court to order an inquiry into the privatisation of the KE and pass an appropriate order over the utility's failure to meet several conditions with regard to the privatisation agreement.

He also questioned the increase of Rs4.90 per unit by the KE and requested the court to stay the implementation of the increase till a decision on the petition.

In another petition against the shortage of gas and low gas pressure in the province, the court directed the Sui Southern Gas Company and others to file comments on the petition.

Petitioner Syed Mehmood Akhtar Naqvi submitted in the petition that Sindh was the major gas-producing province, but the citizens were facing gas shortage and low gas pressure 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.

He submitted that residential consumers were deprived of the gas supply for several hours in different parts of the city, while CNG stations had been closed down for the last several days due to low gas pressure.

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