

No more increase in gas, electricity tariffs: PM

GHALANAI/PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said his government would no more increase gas and electricity rates as inflation had been contained and prices of essential commodities started coming down.

Addressing a public gathering after distributing Kafalat cards among deserving people under the anti-poverty Ehsaas programme, he said: "I have decided not to increase the power tariff anymore because the people can no longer afford. I have decided to take all possible measures to bring down the power tariff in any way."

The prime minister said the prices had surged in the past due to the contracts signed by the previous government agreeing to the purchase of power and gas at exorbitant prices. He said that due to the 15-year gas contract signed by the previous government, Pakistan was getting gas supply at higher rates in the world.

Imran says prices surged due to contracts signed by previous government

He said his government would talk to the power producers and urge them to bring down electricity prices and close down those plants which were producing costly power as no more burden could be passed on to the people and industries.

The prime minister asked the people not to vote for a party with corrupt leadership and said the countries were not poor because of lack of resources, but corrupt rulers. Without naming the Sharifs, he said the whole family had fled abroad.

Mr Khan said that when he had raised the Panama Papers issue he faced several cases and six in the Election Commission and produced 40-year-old contracts and documents in his defence. "Did I flee to London? Neither did I flee nor complained of victimisation. When someone does not commit corruption, he needs not to flee," he added.

Wishing durable peace and stability in war-ravaged Afghanistan, Prime Minister Khan expressed the hope that the [US-Taliban] peace accord will not only bring relief to the Afghan people but also to the dwellers of merged tribal districts in Pakistan. The agreement would benefit the people on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border, he added.

The prime minister said his government would make all-out efforts to enhance trade activities in tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that opening of border with Afghanistan would create job opportunities for the people on both sides of the border.

He said that over eight million Kashmiri brethren and sisters had been locked down in their houses by Indian forces for the past seven months.

The prime minister said the Ehsaas Kafalat Programme was meant for the deserving families in the merged tribal districts, adding that the government was providing funds to the youth through this programme so that they could start their own business in tribal districts as well as the rest of the country. He said the health and education systems in the merged tribal districts were very poor and since there were no job opportunities, people were earning livelihood while working in Saudi Arab, the United Arab Emirates and others Middle East countries.

He admitted that the tribal areas and people had been badly affected by militancy and promised that the government would bring them on a par with the rest of the country. The merged districts would be put on the path to development and prosperity, he pledged, announcing that huge funds would be allocated for uplift schemes.

The prime minister asked the KP government to start mega development projects in tribal areas. He said the government would give 50,000 scholarships each year to the deserving students of merged districts and so far at least 2,500 students had applied for that.

He said Mohmand was suitable for olive trees plantation, adding that the government would soon establish a marble industrial estate in the district to create more job opportunities. He said drinking water would be provided to the local people from Mohmand dam. The prime minister directed federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed to resolve the issue of 3G and 4G services in Mohmand on a priority basis.

Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, Governor Shah Farman, federal ministers Noorul Haq Qadari, Pervez Khattak and Murad Saeed, MNA Sajid Khan Mohmand and Ehsaas Programme chairperson Dr Sania Nishtar were also present on the occasion.

‘Sports vital for human beings’

Addressing the opening ceremony of KP U-21 games at Qayyum Sports Complex in Peshawar, Prime Minister Khan said that certainly the nation was facing hardship but it was not a matter of concern as all the issues would be addressed very soon as effective system had already been introduced in each sector to facilitate people.

He said sports was vital for human beings as good health was a gift of Almighty Allah and keeping care of body meant achieving good physically as well as mentally as a good mind resided in healthy body. Talking about the new talent, he said sports should be promoted in the province to improve youth skills. “Life is the name of competitions and players should not be afraid of defeat as loss teaches us to put in more efforts. Continuous struggle is essential for success,” he added.

PM Khan said if he was not a sportsman he would have rather preferred to sit at home instead of competing continuously. The talent of Pakistan, he hoped, would emerge from these competitions. “Had I not played sports, I would have surrendered 22 years ago,” he said.

Earlier, all the players took part in the march past, followed by national anthem and other events.