

SC rejects review petition in GID cess case

ISLAMABAD: A three-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by Justice Mushir Alam and comprising Justice Faisal Arab and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, rejected on Monday review petitions in the Gas Infrastructure Development (GID) Cess case.

During the hearing of the case, the judges said that the government should not put too much burden on the industry, adding that the government to start the projects and then make the recovery of more money.

During the hearing, Makhdoom Ali Khan, a lawyer for various industries, took the plea that the entire burden had been shifted to the industrial and commercial consumers. He said that the Supreme Court had directed the government to start work on national projects in six months but no plan had so far been launched.

He added that the government had so far collected more than Rs295 billion, while according to official figures, Rs20 billion was required for the North-South project and Rs75 billion for underground storage. After completing these projects, the government would still have money left for a third project therefore, there was no need for depositing another Rs460 billion.

Makhdoom Ali Khan asked the court to direct the government to complete the North-South gas pipeline and underground cold storage projects in the country. After these projects money would be left for the TAPI project.

Makhdoom Ali Khan said there was no hope for start of work on TAPI and Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline projects. He stressed that the government should first spend the money, collected so far, on the projects.

Lawyer for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa industry took the position that the province had abundance of gas therefore, it cannot be burdened with the tax. The lawyer took the plea that it was illegal to levy taxes without cabinet's approval.

Justice Faisal Arab told Additional Attorney General Amir Rehman not to place heavy burden on the industry. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah said that when the government runs the projects then it could recover more.

The additional attorney general took the position that the condition of 48 instalments could be eased for the payment of the arrears. However, the court rejected the review petitions by a majority decision and ruled that the government should recover the arrears in 60 instalments.