



CNG dealers threaten shutdown

Page No.10 Col No.05

KARACHI: CNG dealers on Tuesday slammed the Sui Southern Gas Company's practice of four days in a week loadshedding for the CNG sector in Sindh and warned of a complete strike if their issues were not heard.

Getting tired of extended Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) loadshedding, CNG dealers called a press conference on Tuesday to share their grievances with the SSGC, and strongly opposed its unethical and discriminatory action against them.

Speaking on the occasion, All Pakistan CNG Forum Chairman Shabbir Sulemanjee said the SSGC's current practice of announcing unusual loadshedding is discriminatory. "The CNG stations in Sindh were as it is observing three days of loadshedding on alternate days and this sustained the CNG industry to some extent," he said.

"But since the start of Ramazan, SSGC has resorted to their old tactics by increasing the days of CNG closure with 48-hour consecutive closure schedules. Now there is no CNG on Wednesday and Thursday along with two more days in a week like Saturday and Monday," he said. "Ramazan is a month where people deserve relief but such actions look like an anti-public move," he added.

Karachi Transport Ittehad (KTI) President Irshad Bukhari also said that there was a Rs40 billion investment made by the public by converting cars, vans and buses and other private and commercial vehicles upon the encouragement from the federal and provincial government of Pakistan.

"CNG was promoted as the fuel of the masses for reduction in environmental pollution and import bills. Around 90 per cent of transport here has been converted to CNG having no other alternate source of fuel other than CNG. Therefore the consecutive 48-hour closure is causing a huge difficulty for transporters to manage smooth travel which is ultimately affecting the general public at large," he said.

All Pakistan CNG Forum President Junaid Makda said the CNG sector in Sindh consumes around six per cent of SSGC supply and contributes multiple revenue benefits to the national exchequer including direct and indirect employment, reduction in trade deficits and improving ecology by providing clean and pollution-free environment to the nation.

CNG Dealers Association Chairman Sami Khan said court orders under fundamental rights of Article 158 are being flouted by SSGC and all other sectors except for the CNG sector. All are getting seven days of uninterrupted supply of gas. "The consumption of captive industry has been constantly increasing in the last five years despite the fact that it has alternate means of producing electricity but they use cheaper gas to produce electricity," he said.

Mr Sulemanjee then said that it was forecasted that diesel and fuel prices would go beyond Rs100 per litre in the coming months. "During such a change in dynamics, it is extremely important for the country to give priority to the CNG industry in order to control the trade deficits by reduction in the import bills and providing cheaper source of alternate fuel to the transport sector," he stressed.

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