

Opposition leader Naqvi asks Sindh govt to tax the rich in budget

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By Hasan Mansoor | 9/30/2018 12:00:00 AM

KARACHI: Using analogy of Bollywood movies, Leader of the Opposition in Sindh Assembly Firdous Shamim Naqvi on Saturday said the provincial budget 2018-19 was a 'formula' document stuffed with cryptic figures and vague plans that offered nothing better for the people of Sindh.

'It is a formula budget like an Indian movie to entertain people; yet, it doesn't entertain much,' said Mr Naqvi in his speech during discussion on the Sindh budget presented by the provincial government for the remaining nine months of the current fiscal year.

The assembly session was presided over by Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani. The house will also meet on Sunday (today).

The opposition leader, who belongs to the Pal(istan Tehreek-i-Insaf, said most facts and figures featured in thick and heavy budget books failed to make people understand what the provincial government actually wanted to do and what were its actual plans.

In his nearly three-hour-long speech, Mr Naqvi extensively pleaded for taxing the rich, saying the system was so vague and incoherent that it did not design its targets for effective tax collection.

'Tax the rich and serve the poor,' said the PTI stalwart while making his first-ever speech as the opposition leader in Urdu.

However, he promised that he would deliver the next year's budget speech in Sindhi. He said industrial and hospital waste were hugely hazardous for human life and their dumping in the sea was raising pollution levels dangerously.

Call to make opposition lawmaker PAC chief He asked the government to hand over the chairmanship of the public accounts committee of the house to the opposition.

He said the opposition would be an efficient watchdog, promising that such an arrangement would be constructive with no intentional malice.

Mr Naqvi said the Benazir Income Support Programme was a good idea to improve the standard of life of the poor.

Direct subsidy for the poor was a positive action on which the whole world agreed upon, he added.

'This programme should not be politi-cised,' he observed.

He said one gallon of water being supplied by tankers cost Re1 while the same amount of water through desalination plant could cost only 60 paisa.

He said the head of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board told him that they had to spend 14 paisa on one gallon of water with electricity being supplied by the Sindh government.

No difference between PPP, PTI manifestos He said there was no difference between the manifestos of the

Pakistan Peoples Party and PTI, but serving people with the same spirit as shown in the election manifestos was more important.

He said the PTI wanted to serve Sindh for which it had extended cooperation to the chief minister as well as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan.

The opposition leader said the social sector in Sindh failed to give better indicators, claiming just a single nurse was in Dadu to serve 220,000 people.

He said the government should focus on education, health, water supply and infrastructure.

‘Ending hunger should be on top of all priorities,’ he said, adding that children, women and men were forced to eat from dustbins.

He said Karachi was a poor city despite having huge potential and resources. ‘Karachi has potential to leave behind Dubai and Singapore.

We should realise its strength and resources and give what it truly deserves.

He said those government employees who failed to deliver or did not show up to their work(places should be ‘cleared’ from the scene, for which ‘we will support you’.

K-IV design not changed because of Bahria Town Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani said there were several factors which caused delays in completion of K-IV bulk water supply scheme.

‘Its PC-I was prepared in 2010 and its approval came in 2014, while work on it started in 2016. Between all this, prices of required lands and several other things contributed in overall delay,’ he said.

He rejected an impression that the design of K-IV project was changed to benefit Bahria Town Karachi.

He said work on two schemes for supplying additional 100mgd and 65mgd water to the city were in progress. The schemes would be completed by next year.

Besides, the S-III project to discharge 450mgd of treated sewage into the sea would also be completed next year.

He said the political parties ‘responsible for destruction’ in the local government institutions should assure him in the house that they would not raise hue and cry if he took some radical action to correct the wrongs.

He said work on the desalination plant project had begun.

He said the Sindh government had paid Rs192.5 billion to the city’s municipal bodies in the past 10 years in grants, etc, and the provincial government allocated Rs181bn on 204 schemes, each worth Rs100 million or more, for Karachi in the past 10 years.

This year, he added, Rs44.5bn had been allocated.

He said the government spent Rs28bn, and not Rs90bn, on the development of Larkana in the past decade.

He said the Sindh police was the most independent police in the country as after a court ruling the chief minister could not transfer a single policeman.

Also, a water commission was working only in Sindh, he said, adding similar actions should also be taken in other provinces.

Designs against 18th Amendment won't succeed Former Sindh chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah said peace in Karachi was established and consolidated during the PPP government.

He said those who wanted to scrap the 18th Amendment to the Constitution would not succeed in their designs.

He said the PPP had endured two worst disasters in 2010 and 2011 in the face of floods and torrential rains in Sindh, yet, it could not affect the party's resolve to develop the province.

Works and Services Minister Nasir Shah said doctors in the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases were 'our stars'.

Sardar Shah condemned the Capital Development Authority for printing seals of Moenjodaro and Harappa on the covers of manholes in Islamabad.

He said recruitment of teachers by violating merit started in 1985 when a government formed through a partyless election was put in charge.

PTPs parliamentary party leader Haleem Adil Shaikh thanked PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari for taking notice of the controversial speech made by Sohail Anwar Siyal.

He said he apologised if any action of the lawmakers of his party had saddened anyone.

He said there was a drought-like situation in Malir and the government should take similar steps for the people of those regions as it had taken for Thar, Kohistan and other parts of Sindh.

Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh said not a single federal minister had arrived in Sindh to inquire about the drought-like situation in Thar.

However, he said, it did not deter the provincial government from taking care of its people through its own means as it had been doing for the past many years.

MQM-P fears water riots in city MQM-P's parliamentary party leader Kanwar Naveed feared the city could witness violence in future because of the water crisis.

He added that a fair distribution of water could avert the increasing anxiety among people.

He said around 3,000 officers in the government were on bail in the cases of corruption.

In the last six days, a total of 99 members discussed the budget, which included 52 from the opposition and 47 from the treasury benches.

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