

Gas load management programme for winter chalked out

RECORDER REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources has chalked out a comprehensive gas load management programme for winter 2008-2009, ensuring smooth supply of gas to domestic and commercial sectors even during peak winter months.

Under the programme, gas supply to some of the consumers/sectors has to be given priority under the Natural Gas Allocation and Management Policy.

Sources told Business Recorder on Wednesday that the last meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet had deferred this plan for 2008-09 winter season and constituted a five-member committee headed by MNA Hina Rabbani Khar, to revisit the whole scheme to make it more viable.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources (MP&NR) presented gas load shedding plan to the committee for approval. The

Economic Monitoring Committee (EMC) has already approved the plan. However, the ECC had deferred the summary of the Petroleum Ministry.

The Petroleum Ministry informed the ECC that this year the gap in gas demand and supply will be more than last year and it has to introduce one weekly off of gas for the industrial sector. They also informed the committee that a rotational formula would be implemented for different industrial sectors for one-day weekly gas holiday. Data showed that only 2,567-mmcf/d gas will be available for different consumer categories during upcoming winter season when consumption will go all time high with additional demand of domestic sector. It shows a gap of 1000-mmcf/d gas in demand and supply during winter season.

According to the summary of the Ministry of Petroleum submitted before the ECC, the current gas production in the country is over

3.9 billion cubic feet per day (BCFD). The transmission and distribution of this gas is being done mainly by two gas utility companies and partially by some direct supplies as under: SNGPL, 1.9 BCFD; SSGCL, 1.2 BCFD and independent direct supplies from field, 0.8 BCFD.

During winter months from December to February, the demand of gas especially of domestic consumers increases by 3 to 4 times as compared to their normal requirement because of additional heating needs. This seasonality phenomenon mainly affects the franchise area of SNGPL. The estimated natural gas demand supply position on SNGPL system for winter 2008-09 vis-à-vis for 2007-08 has also been specified in the summary. Due to increasing shortfall, gas supply to some of the consumers/sectors has to be in accordance with the priority, as per the Natural Gas Allocation and Management Policy, 2005.