

No plan to privatise PIA, Qadirpur gas field, NA told

RECORDER REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that it has no plan to privatise Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Qadirpur Gas Field, adding the Qadirpur Gas Field is contributing 14 percent to the total gas production of the country.

Responding to a question in the National Assembly, Federal Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources and Privatisation, Syed Naveed Qamar said that Sindh is contributing 60 percent of the country's total oil production.

Replying to question by Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao and Maulana Fazlur Rahman regarding less gas supply to NWFP whereas it is also contributing to the total gas production of the country, Qamar assured that the provinces where discovery of mineral/natural resources has been made have the first right to get the supply of these resources.

This is the time to rectify the mistakes of the past, he said, adding that certain barriers what he called 'constitutional anomalies' hinder the smooth transfer

of share to the provinces which would be rectified in due course of time. He said that during 2008-09 the total gas production from Qadirpur field was 199.82 billion cubic feet which was 14 percent of the total gas production, while the total oil production of Sindh was 14,330 million barrels, 60 percent of the total production of the country.

Earlier, replying to a query, Federal Minister for Labour and Manpower, Khurshid Ahmed Shah said that PIA is facing a loss of Rs1.5 billion monthly, however, no decision has been taken regarding the privatisation of the national flag carrier.

He informed the house that PIA is facing Rs5.8 billion loss quarterly owing to surge in the prices of oil in the international market, adding that overall loss so far stood at Rs42 billion.

Replying to a question about exploration of minerals, Naveed Qamar said that as per constitutional apportionment, solid minerals are the provincial subject and the provincial governments have launched development scheme for introduction of modern techniques for exploration and exploitation of

mineral deposits falling in their jurisdictions. He said the government has also set up Pakistan Stone Development Company (Pasdec) in the Ministry of Industries, Production and Special Initiatives, which is also introducing modern quarrying techniques cutting and polishing machinery in the stone sector of Pakistan.

He said that under the national mineral policy, foreign investors are encouraged for exploration and development of minerals. At present, he said, Tethyan Copper Company is engaged in exploration at Reko Diq, District Chagai, Balochistan.

Duddar Lead Zinc Project is being run under a joint venture between PMDC and MCC Duddar Minerals Development Company of China in District Lasbela, Balochistan. Saindak Metals Project in District Chagai is being run by a Chinese company, MCC Resources Development Company, he told the house.

Responding to a question about import of oil, he said that oil marketing companies have been made responsible to arrange imports on the basis of cost competitiveness.

About the criteria for the import of POL products, he said that the products will meet the approved specifications notified by the petroleum ministry, while the quality of the products for all importers including OMCs and industrial consumers will be tested by HDIP Laboratory, Karachi prior to unloading.

Sampling of products for quality analysis, he added, will be done by OCAC approved surveyors in the presence of HDIP representative as per prescribed procedure. The same procedure will also apply for HSD imports by OMCs to bulk consumers approved by the ministry, he added.

He said that in case of quality dispute, second retained sample will be tested by HDIP in the presence of nominated representative of the importer. Test results of second sample will be final and binding.

Import quantity for each trader will be determined by OCAC so as to plan and schedule the overall import. The ships used for import should comply with HSE standard and seaworthiness as per criteria prescribed by the concerned ports, he informed the house.