

Indirect taxation: NA urges government to take step towards reducing incidence

The National Assembly on Tuesday passed a unanimous resolution urging the government to take measures to reduce indirect taxation in the country, while members also asked the government to take all decisions in the House regarding imposition of regulatory and anti-dumping duties on imported items.

Jamaat-e-Islami member Sahibzada Tariqullah moved the resolution in the House, saying the government seems least interested in collecting direct taxes and generates its revenue through imposition of the indirect taxes.

"Above 80 percent people are being affected by the indirect taxes, especially the poor," he said, adding the government should increase direct taxes on the rich and well-off.

Tariqullah urged the Speaker to constitute a committee to discuss the issue of public importance and propose a mechanism to provide maximum relief to the common man.

PML-N member Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh also urged the government to increase rate of direct taxes.

He also questioned the decision of the government regarding imposition of regulatory duty and anti-dumping duty on 250 to 300 items by ignoring the relevant committees and the House.

Sheikh said that all important economic decisions should be made in the National Assembly.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf member Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that a specific segment of society has been benefiting through the SROs and they have also been benefiting through the money-laundering.

Speaking on a point of order in the House, PTI member Shireen Mazari sought explanation from Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif for offering the United States a joint operation against the Haqqani network in Pakistani territory.

The US is a strategic partner with India and if a joint operation is conducted, the US will share all important information with India, he said, adding that the US is planning to declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

She questioned intentions of the minister behind this offer.

Responding to a calling attention notice, Minister for Power Awais Ahmed Leghari informed the House that the government would have to inject around Rs 10 billion to Rs 15 billion to upgrade transformers and feeder lines across the country to streamline the transmission system.

He said the government is also mulling introducing a legislation to declare over-billing a crime, adding that there is also need to enhance administrative capabilities of the distribution companies.

The minister said that over-billing and power theft are the major issues in the power sector and these will be tackled to provide relief to consumers.

The government focused on enhancing power generation capacity in the last four years as a result of which power outages have been reduced to a great extent, he said, adding that in the next few months, power supply will exceed the demand.

He also promised the members to brief them on working and performance of the DISCOs and all other issues related to his ministry.

Responding to another calling attention notice, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Sheikh Aftab Ahmad informed the House that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is carrying out investigation into the matter of use of a Pakistan International Airlines plane in a film made in Malta wherein the struggle of Palestinians was negatively portrayed.

He told the House that the PIA Airbus A310 was rented out to a British film making company for which the national flag carrier received over Rs 20 million.

Deputy Speaker in National Assembly Murtaza Javed Abbasi directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to present its investigation report about PIA Airbus A310 within a month before the relevant standing committee and thoroughly

probe the agreement signed with the British company.

The House passed "The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues (Amendment) Bill, 2017" moved by MQM-P member Kishwer Zehra.

The House also passed two separate resolutions urging the government to take steps to deal with the propaganda against Balochistan wisely and vigorously at international fora and to take immediate steps to establish Baba Guru Nanak Sahib International University at Nankana Sahib.

The MQM-P members staged a token walkout from the House in protest against the government for not sharing the Karachi's census data with them.

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