

IN THE PAKISTAN INFORMATION COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

APPEAL NO. 1353-09-2021

Asim Naveed

Vs

Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited

Fawad Malik: Information Commissioner

A. APPEAL

1. Mr. Asim Naveed filed a request under the Right of Access Information Act, 2017 through the Pakistan Citizen Portal. Through his complaint number IS260721-88776889 he has desired the publication of working hours/days of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited on its official website.
2. The respondent public body has dropped the complaint as the matter of the complaint is not actionable / cognizable.
3. Feeling aggrieved of the decision he has filed the appeal before the Pakistan Commission on access to information, Islamabad.

B. PROCEEDINGS

4. The Public Information Officer, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited vide letter dated 18.11.2021, was directed to provide reasons in writing within seven working days as to why the requested information has not been provided to the applicant as under section 14 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017, each public body is bound to respond to a request as early as possible and in any case not later than ten working days of the receipt of the request.
5. The reply was not submitted therefore the appeal was fixed for hearing before the Commission on 20.7.2022 but neither was the reply submitted nor any one appeared to represent the respondent public body.

C. COMMISSION'S VIEW

6. While dealing with the matters related to information and record sought by the citizens under the Act 2017, the public bodies are under obligation to respond the applications as mandated in the Act. In the case in hand the respondent has not acknowledged the application, information is not provided to the applicant in the stipulated time frame and the notices of the Commission are ignored. The reply is not submitted and the hearing before

the Commission was not represented by the public body. It is presumed that the respondent public body is willfully avoiding the proceedings before the Commission and that the public body has nothing in the sleeves to submit in the defense. In such like circumstances the Commission is left with no option but to decide the appeal ex parte after going through the file in light of the Act.

7. The bare reading of the request depicts that the information and record sought by the appellant is of public importance. Each public body is under compulsion to proactively publish including uploading over the internet in a manner to ensure its accessibility to the citizens, all the record detailed in section 5 of the Act.
8. Transparency in the working of the government departments is the essence for the enactment of the Act 2017. Its spirit is to ensure that the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have access to the records held by the federal public bodies for making the government accountable to the people. This practise would improve the participation of the people in the public affairs aimed at reducing corruption, nepotism, discrimination, misuse of power and inefficiency in the governance.

D. ORDER

9. The appeal is allowed. The Public Information Officer, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited is directed to furnish the appellant all the requested information pertaining to the working hours and days of the public body and upload the same on the official website of the organization, forthwith, but in any case not later than seven days of the receipt of this order.

Mohammad Azam
Chief Information Commissioner

Fawad Malik
Information Commissioner

Zahid Abdullah
Information Commissioner

Announced on 19.07.2022

Certified that this order consists of 02 pages, each page has been read and signed

