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Demand for steps against land erosion

By Our Staff Reporter

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KARACHI, Nov 25: The Sindh Assembly on Tuesday demanded of the government to take effective measures to protect land from erosion by the sea in the coastal areas of Badin and Thatta districts.

This demand was made through one of the three resolutions adopted by the house unanimously.

As for the other two resolutions, which were moved separately following a relaxation of the rules under Rule 211, one pertains to the international day for the elimination of violence against women, while the other suggests that Sindh and the Henan province of China be declared 'sister provinces.'

The resolution regarding the erosion of land by the sea was moved by Dr Sikandar Mandhro of the Pakistan People's Party and was one of the five resolutions on the order of the day, which were enlisted after balloting. However, four other resolutions could not be taken up as Speaker Nisar Ahmad Khuhro, with the consultation of the house, adjourned its proceedings at 2.30pm to re-assemble on Wednesday at 10am.

In the resolution it was pointed out that the "active process of sea intrusion and ever increasing rate of erosion has already eaten away millions of acres of fertile land, pushing the population into insurmountable socio-economic hardships".

In his speech, Dr Mandhro expressed concern and — quoting facts and figures — highlighted the need for construction of a coastal highway to protect land from sea erosion.

He pointed out that the Indus Water Treaty, which was signed by Ayub Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru in 1960, deprived the country of the water of three rivers, while the construction of dams, including Tarbela, resulted in reduced flow of water downstream Kotri.

He said according to an international research report, since 1960 the sea was eating away 80 acres fertile land daily and so far, 1,341,941 acres land had been eroded by the sea during the last 48 years.

"If we build a coastal highway and set up windmills along our coastal belt, we could overcome our power crisis and run the economy of Sindh. Likewise, during the Kharif season, the huge amount of water which makes its way into the sea could be utilised for cash crops."

The resolution was backed by Heer Soho, Anwar Mehar, Syed Sardar Ahmad, Bachal Shah, Humera Alwani, Nuzhat Pathan, Sassui Palejo, Manzoor Wassan, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Jam Madad Ali and Ayaz Soomro.

Works and Services Minister Manzoor Wassan also pointed out that from Dhabeji to Keti Bander, which is a 90km distance, construction work on a coastal road had already been initiated.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that he had taken charge of the irrigation department only on Monday and would give priority to developing the coastal areas. He pledged to keep the house informed in every session about the progress made in this regard.