

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry warned the government of long march and strike if gas and electricity to industry is not restored.

A FPCCI's representative in Punjab Sheikh Abdul Waheed Sandal, its regional chairman, and vice president FPCCI Azhar Majeed Shaikh on Wednesday stated that both electricity and gas supply to the industry of Punjab had been suspended since last few days.

The industry will not hesitate to resort to strike and long march for the restoration of gas and electricity supply to the industry.

The energy crisis will unleash a chain of crises leading to destruction of economic and social systems, they said. The suspensions of gas and electricity give a hard blow to \$12 billion export industry, they added.

They said that the ministry of water and power suspended electricity supply to textile industry in Punjab for indefinite period, at a time when the sector is already deprived of gas. Over 80 per cent of the textile industry is located in Punjab, and there has been no power supply to mills for last five days.

He observed that the government would be responsible for any untoward situation, if it failed to restore power supply by 28th December.

Commenting on suspension of power supply to 450 factories in Faisalabad, Azhar said that the Federal Advisor to Prime Minister on Petroleum and Natural Resources Dr. Asim had announced 6 hours a day gas supply to mills in Punjab to mitigate the impact of power outage during peak hours.

But, the power ministry circulated a notification immediately of power supply suspension to textile mills in Punjab for an indefinite period, he added.

They said both president and prime minister of Pakistan had made dozens of commitments to the industry of smooth supply of energy during last one month but none was fulfilled.

They said that Bangladesh was presently exporting textile goods of \$30 billion annually without producing a single bale of cotton, while Pakistan's \$12 billion textile export is in danger due to energy crisis in spite of producing 16 million cotton bales.

They said the country had the potential of exporting up to \$32 billion textile goods, as it was producing around 16 million cotton bales. The FPCCI leaders said the province might turn out to be a very big graveyard of industry due to unavailability of energy, mismanagement and bad governance.

Courtesy: The News