

Convene All Punjab Chambers Roundtable on gas closure

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry has decided to convene All Punjab Chambers Roundtable on gas closure on January 02, 2012 to evolve a line of action against discrimination with Punjab. At an emergent LCCI Executive Committee meeting jointly chaired by the LCCI President Irfan Qaiser Sheikh, Senior Vice President Kashif Younis Meher and Vice President Saeeda Nazar, it was also decided to write a letter to the Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani over the discrimination with Punjab in gas supply. The Executive Committee also decided that a well tailored campaign against the pilferage of gas in the province of Punjab would also be launched as gas theft is the highest as compared to other countries. A special committee to prepare proposals to overcome the energy crisis was also formed so that concrete suggestions could be presented to the government. Executive Committee Members including Sheikh Muhammad Arshad, Sheikh Muhammad Ayub, Mian Rehman Aziz, M. Yousaf Shah, Khawaja Khawar Rashid, Ilyas Majeed Sheikh, Chaudhry Wajid Ali, Mian Abuzar Shad, Khawaja Shahzeb Akram, Ahmad Hasnain, Raees Ahmad Sheikh, Hasnain Reza Mirza, Syed Mahmood Ghaznavi, Shoaib Zahid Malik, Khamis Saeed Butt, Nasir Saeed, Zeeshan Khalil, Waqar Ahmad Mian, Nabila Intisar and immediate past president Shahzad Ali Malik were present in the meeting. Earlier, Steel millers in a meeting with the LCCI Senior Vice President Kashif Younis Meher at the LCCI, have demanded the government to immediately restore natural gas supply to steel industry, otherwise steel manufacturers will be compelled to launch country-wide protest.

Representatives of Pakistan Steel Re-rolling Mills Association (PSRMS) and Steel Melters Association (PSA) warned that if the government did not restore gas supply nearly half-a-million workers would be jobless and the government would lose Rs 14 billion tax revenue. Steel millers pointed out that steel industry did not want to use the last option of protest, but the government was compelling them to come out on the roads. They underscored that the government would be responsible for the situation arising out of protest by the business community. These views were expressed by the patron of Pakistan Steel Re rolling Mills Association Patron in chief Hafiz Muhammad Akbar and Chairman Mian Tariq Waheed in a meeting with the LCCI Senior Vice President Kashif Yunus Mehr. A large number of steel melters and steel re-rollers were present on this occasion. Hafiz Muhammad Akbar said that gas supply had been suspended to over 300 steel mills of Lahore. Furnace oil can be used as alternative but its an expensive choice and would result in hike of prices of all the steel products. He also said that suspension of gas supply would result in total closure of 28 industries of steel sector. Replying to a query he said that they were not aware of the fact that the Chief Minister Punjab Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif surrendered right on gas for Punjab under 18th amendment. He said that they would also meet the Chief Minister Punjab to discuss the issue. Steel sector representatives appealed to the President Asif Ali Zardari, prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani, Federal Petroleum Minister and MD SNGPL to immediately restore gas to steel re-rolling mills and steel melters. Otherwise, hundred of thousands jobs would

become jobless and responsibility would rest on the shoulders of the government. Speaking on this occasion LCCI Senior Vice President Kashif Yunus Mehr disclosed that the executive committee of the Lahore Chamber would soon be meeting to prepare a strategy on the issue of gas supply closure to the industries. He said that every possible step would be taken to ensure restoration of gas supply and even would go on strike if needed. He appealed to all the political parties, federal and provincial governments to prepare a solid policy for restoration of gas supply and equally distribute the available natural resources among all the provinces. The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry has decided to convene All Punjab Chambers Roundtable on gas closure on January 02, 2012 to evolve a line of action against discrimination with Punjab.

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