

PBIF demands non-stop gas supply to industries

President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF) Mian Zahid Hussain has said that gas load management should be improved for uninterrupted supply to industrial sector like domestic and commercial consumers enabling the industry to play its role in the economic growth of the country "Business community cannot accept any measure that affects industrial production," he said, requesting the concerned quarters to take concrete measures for uninterrupted electricity and gas supply to the industries.

Talking to the business community, Mian Zahid urged the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) to withdraw the notices issued to the industries hugely depending upon energy regarding closure of gas for three months. He said SSGC had issued a notice of three-month gas closure from December to February is worrying for the business community. He said according to an estimate there are approximately 1000 units in Karachi, which are completely dependent on the supply of natural gas. These units include: pharmaceuticals, tiles, confectionary, packaging, tiers and other important export-oriented industries.

"To bridge the demand supply gap of gas, government should offer incentives for gas exploration to local and foreign investors," he suggested, adding that LNG may also be imported for instant resolution.

He said that the captive power units were playing vital role in national economy and not only employ millions of people but also contribute millions of rupees to national exchequer in taxes and millions of dollars contribution to foreign reserves through exports.

PBIF president further said that only available option to captive power based units is natural gas as K-Electric is unable to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply in the current situation. In addition, the diesel generator costs Rs35 per unit as compared to the gas that per unit costs Rs9. If the natural gas supply is being closed to these industries for three months, millions of people would be rendered unemployed, national exchequer would lose million of rupees in term of taxes, exports would have drastic impacts, trade deficit which had already accumulated to \$10 billion from July to September would further swell and the position of balance of payments would worsen.

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