

TMA urges resolution of transporters' strike



KARACHI: Chairman of the Towel Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (TMA), Ather Bari, has expressed grave concern over the ongoing nationwide transporters' strike, warning that the prolonged disruption of cargo movement is posing a serious threat to Pakistan's export sector, particularly the textile and towel industry, which contributes significantly to the country's foreign exchange earnings.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Ather Bari noted that the strike has severely disrupted the movement of export consignments from manufacturing units to ports, resulting in shipment delays, increased logistics costs, and growing uncertainty among international buyers.

"Pakistan's exporters are already operating in an increasingly competitive global environment. The continuation of the transporters' strike at a time when export orders are gaining momentum threatens to undermine the confidence of overseas buyers and adversely affect the country's export performance," he stated.

The TMA chairman emphasized that hundreds of export containers are currently stranded at factories and warehouses, while manufacturers are facing difficulties in receiving raw materials and dispatching finished goods. He cautioned that if the situation persists, exporters may face substantial financial losses in the form of demurrage and detention charges, shipment penalties, production disruptions, and possible cancellation of export orders.

Ather Bari stressed that uninterrupted logistics and transportation are critical components of export competitiveness.

“Export success is not determined solely by production efficiency. The timely movement of raw materials and finished products through an efficient logistics network is equally important. Any disruption in the supply chain directly impacts Pakistan’s reputation as a reliable sourcing destination.”

He urged the federal government to immediately engage with all stakeholders and facilitate an amicable resolution to the ongoing dispute in the larger national economic interest. He further called upon the authorities to establish a permanent mechanism to ensure the uninterrupted movement of export cargo during any future industrial action or transport-related disruptions.

The TMA chairman also highlighted that the Association had already submitted detailed proposals for the Federal Budget 2026-27, emphasizing the urgent need to modernize Pakistan’s export logistics infrastructure. Among the key recommendations was the activation and modernization of export-dedicated freight services through Pakistan Railways to reduce excessive reliance on road transportation.

“Pakistan’s export sector remains heavily dependent on road transport, which increases logistics costs, congestion, transit risks, and operational uncertainties. A modern rail-based freight system can provide a cost-effective, reliable, and environmentally sustainable alternative for the movement of bulk and containerized export cargo,” Ather Bari said.

He added that investment in rail freight infrastructure would help reduce transportation costs, improve supply chain reliability, lower fuel consumption, ease pressure on road networks, and support long-term export growth.

Ather Bari reiterated that Pakistan's economic recovery and export expansion require a resilient logistics framework capable of ensuring uninterrupted cargo movement. He urged policymakers to treat logistics and transportation as a strategic component of export policy and take immediate as well as long-term measures to strengthen the country's supply chain infrastructure.

The Towel Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (TMA) strongly urges the government to resolve the current impasse without further delay and to implement sustainable logistics reforms to safeguard Pakistan's export competitiveness and economic growth.