

Pakistan: Farmers beat drums outside sugar mill over delayed payments

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MUZAFFARGARH: A good number of farmers gathered outside the Tandliawala Sugar Mills on Monday and Tuesday and locked the main gate over non-payment of sugarcane due for the last three months.

On Monday, farmers also held a sit-in outside the gate and slept there overnight in protest while the district administration failed to ensure timely payments to farmers.

The farmers on Tuesday called drummers and they danced to drumbeats making the protest a sort of lively festival. The drumbeats and farmers' dance woke the district administration and arrived at the scene.

An official of the sugar mill said the mill was paying dues to farmers at per commitment but when the Federal Investigation Agency took action against sugar brokers, it affected the sugar bag supplies.

He said a huge stock of sugar was lying on the mills premises but no contractor was ready to buy it.

A large number of farmers also occupied the deputy commissioner office and alleged that no one was ready to help them because when they approach the DC office, they were asked to contact the assistant commissioner, where the representative of AC writes a few names of farmers who could be facilitated.

Farmers Lateef, Abdul Rehman and Chaudhry Boota complained this time the mill and the district administration had disappointed them on the payment issue.

Deputy Commissioner Amjad Shoaib Tareen said he was looking into the matter. He said he gave the last warning to mill officials if they did not release payments, he would take stern action against them.

Farmers alleged the mills cane general manager was responsible for the payment fiasco as he did not meet any farmer.

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