

Apparel makers foresee supply crunch

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Apparel manufacturers fear there would be a supply crunch in the coming festive season, as workers at some leading mills in Ahmedabad are on a strike. These manufacturers, who start procuring fabric for the festive season at this time of the year, are already facing problems in procurement.

"We have already been affected due to the current slowdown. Going forward, if the strike continues,

there is a huge possibility that there will be a supply crunch in the market, especially during the festive season," said Rahul Mehta, president of the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India.

The manufacturers were hoping for a revival in demand during the spring/summer season, but that didn't happen. Now, they fear the supply crunch would ruin their hopes of a revival during the next festive season.

An apparel manufacturer said on condition of anonymity that he

placed an order for denim fabric with Arvind, but was yet to receive it due to the ongoing strike.

Demanding a flat 40 per cent wage rise, workers at Arvind Ltd's Naroda plant went on strike on June 4. The plant manufactures about 84 million metres of the 108 million metres of denim the company makes. Later, textile workers from three other mills, including Arvind's voiles division, Ankur Textiles, went on strike with similar demands. The others were Asarwa Mills and Ashima Textiles.

In all, 8,000 workers in the Ahmedabad textile industry have gone on strike, impacting production by 60-70 per cent in most mills. The workers' representative union, the Textile Labour Association (TLA), had filed a petition in an industrial court in October against the Ahmedabad Textile Mills Association. But defying TLA, the workers called for a strike which is now on for the past four weeks. At most of these mills, a worker earns an average monthly salary of ₹5,000-6,000.