

Chamber, builders slam demolition notices

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and Association of Builders and Developers (Abad) on Wednesday condemned the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) for issuing demolition notices to 930 converted commercial buildings in the city.

Addressing a joint press conference along with the representatives of Abad, FPCCI President Engineer Haji Daroo Khan said a review petition will be submitted by the apex chamber before the Supreme Court to revisit its decision.

Patron-in-chief Abad Mohsin Sheikhani, Chairman Abad Muhammad Hassan Bakshi and Senior Vice President FPCCI Mirza Ikhtiar Baig were also present on the occasion.

A press release issued by Abad quoted the FPCCI chief as saying that the SBCA had misinterpreted the Supreme Court order. These measures were creating a sense of uncertainty among the business community of the city, he said. The federation does not support illegitimate elements, but demolishing leased properties is wrong, he added.

The FPCCI chief urged SBCA to prepare a list of illegal structures in consultation with Abad so that the issue could be sorted out.

He said around 72 industries were associated with the construction industry alone and demolishing buildings would severely discourage flow of investment.

On the occasion, Mr Bakshi said Abad supported action against illegal buildings but targeting legal and regularised buildings would not be tolerated.

“Builders have paid more than Rs25 billion to the SBCA in the last 15 years for the regularisation and conversion of residential plots into commercial ones.

As such there is no justification to demolish such buildings,” he said.

The SBCA, he added, had itself leased these buildings as commercial buildings in past and that issuing notices to hundreds of commercial building had created a panic and unrest among business community.

Meanwhile, Mr Sheikhani demanded that an inquiry should be conducted to identify elements that had leased these converted buildings if it was wrong. However, he clarified that these buildings were constructed on converted plots according to the law and with the approval of all concerned government departments.

Mr Baig said that 930 buildings were converted into commercial units in the last 15 years after a 5-member bench of Supreme Court had ruled in favour of such a conversion.

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter