

Business community of Faisalabad defers protest

FAISALABAD: The business community of Faisalabad on Monday deferred its protest of Feb 8 and wheel-jam strike of Feb 10 on the assurance of Punjab Governor Ch Muhammad Sarwar.

Punjab Governor Ch Muhammad Sarwar was addressing a joint press conference after a meeting with FCCI president Rana Sikandar Azam, Mian Naeem Ahmed and Arif Ihsan Malik, vice chairman of the Joint Action Committee of the business community here. A joint committee consisting of local parliamentarians and business leaders has been constituted to resolve the issues. The Punjab governor said that he was asked by PM Imran Khan to visit Faisalabad immediately and resolve the problems of the business community. He said that he himself belong to this class and fully understand their issues.

It was very encouraging that the businessmen were ready to pay taxes as we could not run the country without their taxes, Sarwar added. However, in undocumented economy, we had to plan short, medium and long term strategies to expand the tax net and for this purpose we had to work jointly, the governor opined.

He told that the government had made a commitment to make refund claims of exporters within 72 hours. He said that cash flow was major concern of any businessmen and if 17 per cent capital of a business was excluded from his circulation, he would be unable to run his business.

He said that he understands that businessmen and industrialists had no links with politics and we had also categorically assured them before election that no one of them would be victimised on the basis of his political affiliation and we had honored this commitment, he added.

He told that national development was directly linked with business community as they generate wealth, provide jobs and pay taxes to run the country. Responding to a question, the Punjab governor said that no delaying tactics would be used during negotiations with business community and final decision would be made as soon as the recommendations of the committee were discussed and approved by the concerned ministries.

National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Chairman Faizullah Kamoka said that he had openly pleaded the case of business community of Faisalabad in National Assembly and had also convened an immediate meeting of the standing committee on Feb 4. He assured that the routine agenda of the meeting would be deferred and only problems identified by the business community would be discussed in the meeting. Earlier, FCCI president Rana Sikandar Azam said that the government had clamped 17 per cent sales tax on zero rated sectors.

“The electricity tariff had been enhanced despite categorical commitment of 7.5 per unit to 13 per cent, he said and added that this had made for the business community impossible to continue their businesses. The industries were also being closed and in this situation more than 150 trade organisations had unanimously decided to launch a protest and go on strike. “I also had a meeting with PM on January 20 and informed him of the gravity of the situation,” he told and added that his advisors were not painting true picture of situation. The FCCI president told that the business community had nothing to do with politics but being head of the FCCI, he could not ignore the problems of his members. He was optimistic that the committee comprising of parliamentarians and the business community would submit its recommendations before Feb 8.